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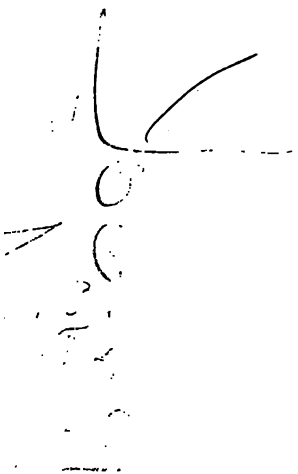

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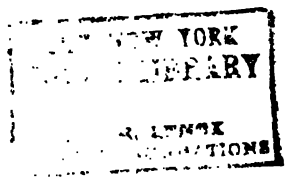
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"You don't feel quite so angry as you did, now do you?"

1178.

Brown of Harvard

By

Rida Johnson Young

And

Gilbert P. Coleman

Illustrated

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BROWN OF HARVARD

CHAPTER I

MADDEN'S TUTOR

IT was the kind of day in April that invites to languor, to close communion with nature, to the involuntary manufacture of spring poetry even if one does n't know the difference between a dithyramb and an acrostic; the kind of day when you feel that it would be too bad to have heaven removed to some place remote from this heavenly earth; a day of indefinable yet certain yearnings and aspirations, of joy in the very passive act of existence, when the mildest form of mental exercise makes the labor of Sisyphus seem, by comparison, a mere boyish, gleeful romp. The very air appeared to

be laden with the sweet promise of shady trees, of rich, velvety green fields, of laughing brooks, of the teeming life and gladness of a fruitful summer,—a day when a man, unless he be the most unreasonable and abnormal of creatures, can have no enemies, no thoughts other than those of forgiveness and sympathy, and the supreme luxury of doing nothing.

A vague notion of such things as these drifted deliciously into the not over ready mind of Claxton Madden as he lay sprawled—the whole six feet of him—on the broad window-seat in the study room which he shared at Harvard with his chum Tom Brown. He was clad in all the outrageous incongruity of a college man when enjoying to the full the sweet seclusion of his own apartment. On his feet were a pair of faded Turkish slippers, their soles almost burnt through owing to his habit of resting them in a precarious poise on the tip of his andiron, and then neglecting, from very inertia, to remove them to a more respectful distance when the fire got too hot. His trousers were

of the regulation college wide-hip fashion, a faint reminder of the "peg-tops" of the days of our fathers. The upper part of his body was encased in a sweater—that convenient college garment that so often covers a multitude of sins. And yet, in spite of the loose fit of his costume, it was easy to see that Madden was a young man of magnificent physical proportions. His head was rather small, almost of the Greek mould, and even the looseness of his sweater failed to conceal the massive shoulders, the thick, powerful neck, the immense expanse of chest; and as for the extravagantly wide trousers, the simple truth is that they were almost fully occupied by the fine muscular development of his hips and thighs and legs.

The room was typical of university life at Cambridge. It was one of those rooms designed especially for students, with doors leading off to the bedchambers, and still another door opening on the hallway. Madden and Brown had chummed together for three years, and that period had been sufficient for them to accumulate

even a greater variety than usual of banners, posters, photographs, sofa-pillows, junk of every description, the whole being arranged in barbaric profusion. Indeed, it seemed to have been their sole ambition, in the matter of interior decoration, to have as little of the bare wall exposed as possible, no matter what the artistic result might be.

It was only four o'clock in the afternoon, and yet the blinds of the large window looking out on the street were carefully drawn, and the place was enveloped in an untimely, unnatural dusk. It was, in fact, so dark that Madden was obliged to hold the book he was endeavoring to study close to his eyes, while his lips moved from time to time like those of a child in the painful effort of learning to read, and he hissed gently when he encountered an unaccustomed word—which, by the way, was a matter of not infrequent occurrence.

It was when he had met one of these verbal monsters for, perhaps, the hundredth time, that he suddenly sat up, and,

seizing the book in a vicious grasp, hurled it desperately across the room.

"Damn astronomy!" he apostrophized the helpless cause of his torture. "I wish it had never been invented. To think of my being confined to this hole when the boys are out on the river, when the air is full of such—such jolly smells. It 's a shame to inflict such a thing on a healthy college man. Study? Why, who could study with the birds chattering away to beat the band, and everything so kind of—of out-of-doors! I can actually *feel* the leaves growing on the trees. Astronomy! The stars! When a man only wants to get next to Mother Earth!"

He sat still for a moment gazing ruefully at the volume he had so unceremoniously spurned from him, and as he lounged back luxuriously against the cushions of the window-seat there came a sharp rap at the door. Madden's face brightened. Here was promise of a change, at all events. In his present mood he felt that he could even have welcomed a sociable dun.

"Come in," he shouted.

The door opened slowly, and there entered, first, a thin, scrawny young man, whose hair was already beginning to disappear, whose shoulders were stooped, apparently from much study, and who, evidently from the same cause, wore spectacles with enormously thick lenses. He was the exact antipodes of the hale, hearty, athletic figure before him. The latter addressed him jovially.

"Hello, Cartright,—what 's the game? I 'm awfully glad to see you, old man. Been out trying for the crew, as usual, I suppose?"

They both laughed at this facetious sally, and then Cartright, turning to his companion who had followed him into the room,—

"Madden," he said, "this is Thorne—Gerald Thorne. You may not know it, but he 's in your class—I mean in your class at college. Possibly you 've never met him at lectures. You remember you told me you wanted somebody to coach you in astronomy, so I 've brought him

around. He stands A 1 and can pull you through in spite of yourself. Think what a wonder he must be. Thorne, this is Claxton Madden, member of the crew, whose only weakness is a yearning to consume the midnight oil—olive oil on salads, you know."

Madden rose and grasped the stranger's hand. What he saw was a young man, with a serious, almost old face, from which the joy and bright, wholesome light of youth had apparently died out forever, if indeed they had ever been present there. He was, however, a man of tremendous muscular power, a circumstance that was manifest despite his somewhat ungainly carriage, his ill-fitting clothes, and the general embarrassment of his manner, He was fully an inch taller than Madden himself, and the quiet reserve of his physical prowess immediately commanded from the latter a respectful attention wholly dissociated from any admiration he might have entertained from Thorne's superior knowledge of astronomy. It is "physics," not astronomy or chemistry,

or any other of the varied courses in the curriculum, that the true college man appreciates. And thus it was that Madden, in the enthusiasm for his visitor's powerful physique, began, in the most matter-of-fact way, suddenly to feel his arms and shoulders, to poke him in the ribs—eventually winding up by saying——

"Why, man, you're a credit to the university. Great! Say—do you row? Have they been after you for the crew?"

Thorne smiled, somewhat sadly it seemed.

"Yes, they have asked me to join the squad and go into training, but,—I don't really see where I can get the time. I am working my way through college, you know."

Working his way through college! That meant tutoring, and drudgery of the worst kind, possibly even waiting on table,—an entire cutting out of the ordinary, reasonable pleasures of college life, an existence so foreign to Madden's, that the latter could not help regarding his

visitor with a look of curiosity, not unmingled with pity.

At this point, however, they were interrupted by Cartright.

"Hello!" he cried, noticing for the first time the drawn curtains, "what on earth are you all shut up for?"

Madden gazed at him dismally.

"Do you suppose I can devote my mind to ——"

"Your what?" said Cartright in feigned amazement.

"That 'll do for you. Don't try to be funny; my *mind,* I said, and strange to say I 've got one left after trying to cram all this stuff into it. Do you suppose I can devote my mind to astronomy while the windows are open, and I can actually see the fellows out there on the river? My dear fellow, the only place to grind in is a dungeon, and I 've tried to make my room as much like the Black Hole of Calcutta as possible."

"Oh, nonsense," returned Cartright with a laugh. "Open up and let the sun in. You know the sun 's a part of as-

tronomy. You 'll find yourself all the better for it." Whereupon he walked deliberately to the window, and pulling back the curtains, sent the blind up with a snap. In an instant the room was flooded with the bright, declining sunlight of the spring afternoon, while the incessant chattering of birds on the tree directly before the window seemed to mock the prisoner in his self-immolation.

For a moment Madden glared at Cartright with a look of surprised annoyance.

"I say, old man," he ventured at length, "you 've got a nerve—spoiling my dungeon, and interrupting my studies. How on earth do you ever expect me to pass my exams if you queer me this way?" Then he rushed eagerly over to the window, and, leaning on the seat, stretched his muscular frame through the casement.

"Oh, just look at it!" he ejaculated in a rapture, while he filled his lungs with the delicious aroma of the atmosphere. "Just look at it! And to think I can't even go out for a little toddle!"

Cartright laughed again.

"If you had n't toddled so much this

year you would n't have to stay in your dungeon and cram now."

Madden drew back into the room and placed himself by the side of his friend, so that the difference in their physical "make-ups" was brought out in almost ridiculous contrast.

"Old man," he said, as he smoothed Cartright's meagre, sandy hair, "you know I really believe it would do you good if you could toddle a little bit more outdoors yourself. You 're not getting the full advantage of a college education. O Lord!" he went on impulsively, "why are things so unevenly distributed in this world? Now, if you only had a little of my chest and arms, and I had a little of your—of your——"

"Brains," supplied Cartright. "Yes, —I know what you mean. Some fellows are all intellect and no muscle; others are all muscle and no—er—er—no offence, old man. Well, I must be going. Thorne, I wish you joy with your brilliant pupil. You 've got an excellent chance to squeeze blood out of a turnip."

And in his exit Cartright escaped only by a hair's breadth the tennis racquet which Madden had hurled at him with remarkable dexterity, considering that he had taken so quick an aim.

CHAPTER II

A LESSON IN ASTRONOMY

MADDEN walked over to the door, and picking up the racquet tossed it on the top shelf of a book-case, thereby narrowly imperilling a small plaster cast of Venus de Milo. Then turning toward his companion he asked somewhat mournfully, as if he dreaded the inquisition that was to come——

"Why don't you sit down, old man? Pardon me if I get a little violent at times —I 'll come out all right in the end."

Thorne took a seat near the study table in very obvious embarrassment. This fellow Madden was not at all of his "set." He had heard of him as a rich young man, inclined to be rather wild, except when he was in training for the crew,—a man whose sphere of college life had never

once come into contact with his own. As Cartright had hinted, though they were classmates, such is the wide diversity of existence at Harvard, he had, to the best of his knowledge, never seen him before, a circumstance that would cause a Harvard man of a generation ago to open his eyes with wonder, if not with disapproval.

Madden threw himself dejectedly into an arm-chair and tilted his feet into their favorite position on the andiron.

"Well, fire away, Governor," he said. "Let 's have the tooth out quick, and if you think it 's going to hurt much, just give me gas."

The tutor drew a note-book and fountain pen from his pocket, and after carefully adjusting the latter, began, in a manner more embarrassed than ever.

"I—a—may I ask how far you have gone in this year's work?"

Madden stared at him blankly.

"Gone? How far I have gone?"

"Yes. What was the last lecture you attended?"

Madden looked at his companion again

sharply, to see if perchance these apparently innocent words were the vehicle for some gibe. Thorne's manner, however, was ingenuousness itself. He was very evidently in earnest.

"The last lecture? Why, my dear fellow, I haven't gone to any. What do you suppose I would want you here for if I had been prowling around the lecture-rooms all through the year? My dear chap, that's what I sent to you for—to throw those lectures into me that I've missed. I want you to boil the whole thing down into a nutshell," he added. "You are to give me the dose in capsule form."

Thorne gazed at him in still greater wonder. Was it possible for a man to go nearly through a term without attending a single lecture? He recalled his own bitter struggles, his sacrifices, to get to college, and how punctiliously he had taken advantage of every opportunity afforded in the curriculum.

Madden, noticing Thorne's expression of genuine surprise, went on:

"If I had the faintest idea about all these azimuths and zeniths and things, and all that rot, don't you suppose I 'd be out imbibing the atmosphere, instead of chinning with you? My dear fellow, my knowledge of astronomy is surprising, from one point of view, anyway. I really did make an effort to read up at the beginning of the year—got as far as 'right ascension,'—you know it comes under the definitions on the first page. Well, sir, I could n't for the life of me make out what it meant, and when I went to the instructor on the quiet, and asked him what was the difference between a right ascension and a left ascension, he gave me the ha, ha, right to my face. He did, on the level."

At this delightful confession, Thorne's sombre face lighted up with an appreciative smile.

"Oh, I tell you," continued Madden, with a somewhat virtuous indignation, "if I 'd known there was so much mathematics in astronomy I 'd never have elected it. I thought it was a cinch,—a

sort of fortune-telling business, you know. 'Born under the planet Venus you will be loved by a light-haired lady,' and all that kind of thing. I never dreamed what I was going up against. But come on, I 'm doing all the talking. Let 's get to work."

Thorne settled himself into a serious and didactic attitude.

"Well," he said, adopting the dry, even tone of the pedagogue, and plunging *in medias res,* "following the mathematical investigations of Professor George Scannel, it is found that binary stars will tend to separate. Inertia will cause the tidal protuberances to lag behind so that——"

"Hold on!" interrupted Madden with intense seriousness. "'Binary stars!' 'Tidal protuberances!' Say, old fellow, you must n't—you really must n't. I can't stand for it. Really, seriously, I don't care to know anything deep about the subject; *deep,* you understand. Why, if I got to chinning about binary protuberances the fellows would never forgive

me. They would think I was trying to lord it over them. My idea is to get a few handy catchwords that 'll make a good show on paper—see?"

Thorne gazed at him blankly.

"Catchwords? I can't say that I do."

At this juncture a strident voice floated in from the streets:

"Oh—h—h—! Clax!"

Madden sprang out of his seat, upset the andiron, and rushed over to the window.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, "there 's Van! Hi there!" he shouted, as he thrust his body eagerly through the window-frame, "what you want?"

"Come on out!" demanded the voice.

"Can't do it. Got a 'grind' up here stuffing me in astronomy."

"Any good!" inquired the voice solicitously.

"Oh, pretty good," replied the other, wiggling his feet up and down as if he would like to spring from the window. "Kind of long-winded, though. I can't get in a word edgewise."

Angered, mortified, Thorne half rose from his seat, and then as quickly subsided. For somehow, despite his pupil's brusque manner, there was something about him that was engaging—something that was genuine. Thorne could not bring himself to believe that this wholesome, hearty young fellow could be intentionally rude.

"Well, so long," replied the voice from the street, "sorry you can't come out."

"So long," replied Madden. He turned from the window, then rushed back and once more thrust his head out precariously through the casement.

"Say, Van, what kind of time did you make up the river to-day?"

"Good!" was the answer. "Four seconds better than yesterday. We 'll do those Englishmen to a turn when they come over. So long, old man. Awfully sorry you could n't be with us."

Madden returned to his arm-chair and threw himself into it with an air of the most abject misery.

"Now, look here, old sport," he said

petulantly, "you 've got to get a move on you. I can't waste my time like this."

Instead of indignation, which perhaps he had a right to feel, Thorne gazed at his hopeful pupil with a most distinct sensation of astonishment.

"Well—er—" he said after a few moments of confused silence, "suppose I give you a sort of—a—a—table of the different binary stars, with a few words of description after each?"

"Bully!" replied Madden, "that 's the stuff—just enough to make a nice little show without learning too much astronomy. Wait a minute, though, I 've lost my lead-pencil." He groped for a while in a mass of books and papers which he had previously swept from the study table to the floor, and eventually succeeded in resurrecting a miserable stub of a lead-pencil and a few loose sheets of paper.

"Now, let her go Gallagher!"

"Well, in the first place," began Thorne solemnly. But he was not destined to go farther. There was suddenly the sound of loud singing and tramping

on the stairway, the door burst open unceremoniously, and three college men entered, their hands on each other's shoulders, in true penitentiary lock-step fashion, and chanting, to the old familiar tune,

Tom Brown's body is alive and feeling good,
Tom Brown's body, here's a fact that's understood,
Tom Brown's body's got a head that's made of wood,
As we go marching on!

Madden looked upon his visitors with a cheerful disgust.

"Get out of here, you yaps. Can't you see I'm working?"

The intruders suddenly stopped, and stared at him in finely simulated wonder. Then, almost as if they had rehearsed the act, they dropped to the floor in a line, one upon the other. Madden snatched a book off the table and hurled it at them viciously. It struck the leader on the back of the head, but, paying no attention to this delicate reception, they rose simultaneously to all fours and began to march around Madden and Thorne chanting the

words, "Grind, grind,—grind, grind, grind," meantime keeping excellent time with their hands and feet.

The light of combat danced in Madden's eyes. Springing once more out of his chair he jumped on the prostrate line of his visitors and began to pummel them right and left.

"I 'll teach you, Happy Thurston, and you, Tubby Anderson, and you, Jean de Reszke, to come butting into my room making rough-house when a man 's working," he exclaimed, pounding each of his visitors as he mentioned his name.

"Ouch!" exclaimed he who had been punched as Happy Thurston. "Remember, we 're your guests."

In the midst of the confusion there was heard the "Kronk, kronk" of an automobile horn under the window.

"It 's the Kid," cried "Jean de Reszke," better known to his parents as Warren Pierce—a young man who had received his nickname owing to the fact that he possessed a high tenor voice and sang on the glee club. All hands sprang

from the floor and made a rush for the window, leaning far out and leaving nothing visible to the somewhat discomfited Thorne but a row of wildly struggling legs.

"Hi, Kid!" yelled they of the legs—"Come on up, we 're paying you a visit!"

There was a sound of singing on the steps and in the hallway outside, and in a moment the door was flung open, revealing a young man of medium height, thickset, with a handsome, happy, almost careless countenance, and a wealth of curly hair which cropped up round about the edges of a wofully unsizable cap.

"Hello, fellows," he cried in a tone of jolly welcome to his visitors, who had emerged once more wholly into the room —"glad to see you. My, how you 've grown—sideways—Tubby, since——"

But here Madden broke in.

"Oh, say now, fellows, on the level," he said sinking once more into his arm-chair, "I 've got to get down to work. Won't you please, *please* go? Clear out, won't you?"

Tom turned to his chum, his blue eyes fairly beaming with glee.

"Well, old man," he said, "if you really have to work—if there 's no way out of it, why, I won't tell you what I came to tell you. No, it would n't be fair to disturb him with the news—would it, boys?"

"News? What news?" asked Madden seriously. And then, his thoughts reverting to the first and chief object of his solicitude—

"Is there anything the matter with the crew?"

"No—the crew 's all right," replied his chum reassuringly, "but—but say, boys—is n't it a shame he 's got to work when—say, Clax, old horse," he added, breaking off suddenly, "would you mind retiring to your room while you perform this miraculous studying stunt of yours? I 'm expecting some girls to tea."

"Oh, look here, Tom," said Madden in a tone of genuine disgust, "you don't mean to say you 've invited a bunch of women up here when you know I did n't want to be disturbed?"

"Well," responded Tom solemnly, "the truth is I happened to meet Miss Sinclair on Brattle Street and she looked so thirsty that I——"

Madden sprang out of his chair, his face glowing with delight, in marked contrast to his former expression of despair.

"No—did you though, really, Tom? Edith? Why did n't you say so at first?"

"Why, my dear fellow, you were so eager to grind, you know, that I thought it would be very inconsiderate."

"Oh, grind your grandmother," snapped back Madden, beginning to tug at his sweater preparatory to pulling it off. "Which way did she go?"

"Go?" replied Tom innocently. "Why, I 'm sure I don't know. It may have been east,—but come to think of it, perhaps she went west."

By this time Madden had succeeded in getting his sweater fairly over his head, and, with an inarticulate reply that did not appear to be altogether complimentary, groped his way into his bedroom.

"You need n't be in such a rush, old man," Tom cried out after him. "They won't be here for a good half-hour. She 's going to stop for Mrs. Ames and Evelyn."

"I say, Tom," said Thurston, who during the past few minutes had been lounging luxuriously on the window-seat, one knee crossed over the other and his hands clasped in Sybaritic repose under his head, "we don't want to butt into your tea fest. The truth is, we came up to ask you if we could have your benzine buggy for half an hour or so, if you 're not going to use it."

"Sure thing," replied Tom cordially; "but don't you try to play any Vanderbilt cup stunts. You know, last time—"

"Oh, that 's all right. We 'll be good. Much obliged, old man. Come along, fellows," whereupon Thurston and his companions hustled precipitately out of the room, to the tune of the national anthem set to appropriate words for automobiling purposes.

Scarcely had the door closed when it

opened again, and a young man, pale, haggard, bearing very evident marks of dissipation, stepped slowly into the room.

"Hello, Ames," greeted Tom cheerfully, at the same time studying his visitor curiously. "You look a little seedy. What 's up?"

Ames glanced meaningly toward Thorne, who, standing in the half-obscurity of the fireplace, had remained unobserved ever since Brown's entrance into the room. Tom, following Ames's glance, saw the stranger for the first time.

"Why—what the deuce?" he said,—"I did n't know you were here. Who—who are you?"

Poor Thorne felt himself fairly overwhelmed with embarrassment.

"I—I was waiting to see—" he stammered,—"do you think Mr. Madden will want me any more?"

"Will want you? What on earth should he want you for?"

Thorne shifted his position uneasily, clutching the edge of the mantel in a nervous grasp.

"My name is Thorne. I was asked—was employed by Mr. Madden to coach him in astronomy."

"Oh," replied Tom carelessly, "no; I guess he won't have any more use for you to-day." And then turning to the other, he inquired:

"Well, Ames, what can I do for you?"

There was a rudeness in his manner, unintentional to be sure, but still a rudeness, and it stung this sensitive, shy, powerful young man to the quick. And as he left the room it was with a feeling of wounded pride, of bitterness,—of deep resentment.

CHAPTER III

WILTON AMES

"SAY, Kid," said Ames, as he sank into a chair by the study table, "I 'm in an awful hole."

"That 's about the tenth hole you 've struck this year," returned Tom, with a tinge of reproof in his tone. "You ought to be careful how you walk."

"Oh, hang it all, Kid," replied Ames, in a voice that was almost a whine, "don't be so cold-blooded. I should n't have come to you if I had n't known how fond you were of my mother and sister. I tell you, man, I 'm desperate! You fellows with rich fathers don't know——"

"Oh, we don't, don't we?" interrupted Tom, "we don't know what it is to face a cold, unfeeling world,—to know the bitter sting of poverty emphasized by the out-

rageous flings of a taunting parent. Just you listen to this "—he took a letter from his pocket—" it 's from the governor:

" ' My dear son: In answer to my repeated questions as to what you intended to do on leaving college you at last announce that you will follow your literary inclination and write for money. Well, allow me to say that your training at Harvard thus far should have made you very proficient in that respect, as you have done practically nothing else but write for money for the last three years. Twice you have overdrawn your account,' and so on. Now, don't you think," said Tom, endeavoring somewhat futilely to summon up an expression of chagrin, " don't you think that is cruel treatment to a studious, provident, talented offspring? "

" Oh, hang it all, Kid," replied Ames, with some impatience. " I know it 's very funny, and all that sort of thing, but I tell you, man "—and here his voice quavered, and the pallid, drawn look on his face became suddenly accentuated—" I tell you I 'm—I 'm desperate."

And with these words Ames buried his face in his hands, and, leaning on the table, sobbed convulsively.

Tom's whole demeanor changed in an instant. Stepping quickly to the young man's side he spoke to him solicitously, tenderly, almost as a woman would speak to a child in distress.

"Ames, I—oh, I say, old man, brace up. I 'm very sorry. I 'm awfully sorry. I hope I have n't hurt your feelings. Of course I 'll help you out if I can. Come, now, tell me all about it—what 's the row? "

It was several moments before Ames could collect himself sufficiently to speak.

" Oh, Kid," he said at length in a voice so choked as to be scarcely articulate, " it 's—it 's everything. I know I have been a selfish brute—I 've always thought of myself first, and—and you see what it has brought me to. I 'm a wreck—a poor, miserable, worthless wreck."

" Oh, come now, Ames," said Tom kindly, placing his hand on the other's

shoulder, "don't feel so badly about it; brace up; you 've got the stuff in you, I know. Now, what is it?"

"It 's everything, Tom — everything. I don't dare to tell you how bad it is. In the first place, it 's money. I lost a hundred dollars to Anson last month, and you know what a shark he is ——"

"Oh, yes—I know him," replied Tom cheerfully—"the kind of fellow who possesses a peculiar gift of never losing, and who never has but one cigarette in his case."

"He says he 'll go to my mother, Tom, and you know she can't help me." And then, his voice resuming the old whine that seemed habitual to him, he went on:

"Here we are, my mother, my sister, and myself, one of the oldest and best families in Cambridge, living in an exclusive neighborhood among the best people, and always dogged by that horrible nightmare of trying to keep up appearances on my mother's paltry income."

Even Tom's good nature had some dif-

ficulty in countenancing this exhibition of selfishness.

"Yes," he said dryly, "it must be rather hard on the women."

"Oh, don't, Kid, don't rub it in. I know I owe you a lot of money already, but if you 'll help me out this time ——"

Here he broke off weakly, once more leaning his head on his hands.

Tom gazed down at him for a moment pityingly, then shrugging his shoulders walked over to a desk at the side of the room and began rummaging about among the pigeon holes, at the same time muttering, half to himself:

"Where the devil 's my check book gone?"

"Tom!" exclaimed Ames hoarsely.

Tom turned sharply around on his visitor. There was something in his voice that denoted a misery far more intense than that caused by the mere lack of money.

"Tom," he said rapidly, impetuously, as if he had summoned up his strength for a supreme effort and dreaded lest his

nerve fail him. "I would n't tell anybody but you. But I must tell you, Kid —you must help me. You remember that awfully pretty girl from the South, Marian Thorne, I introduced you to? Well, she—she——."

At this point, however, there was an interruption. For Madden, partly dressed, poked his head out of his room, razor in one hand and towel in the other.

"I say, Kid, what do you use after shaving?"

"Courtplaster," returned Tom promptly.

"Ah, don't be funny. Go and get me some bay rum, there 's a good fellow. I 'm all out."

Tom, who in the meantime had miraculously recovered the object of his search, tossed it on the table and disappeared in his own room.

Ames, left alone, absently picked up the check-book, which had been thrown almost under his very face, and opening it, idly turned over the leaves. Suddenly his attitude underwent a complete change, and he gazed at the book with a sharp intake of the breath, as if fascinated.

Then with a muttered exclamation he threw it from him, but as quickly recovered it, tore out two or three of the blank pages and thrust them into his pocket, just as Tom re-entered the study.

"I 'm' sorry, old man," Tom shouted to Madden, "but I 'm all out of bay rum myself. Got a little of the Jamaica variety, if you 'd like to apply it externally."

"Go to the devil!" was the cheerful response from the innermost penetralia of Madden's bedroom.

"Oh, I say, Ames," said Tom, approaching the table and observing the agitation in his visitor's manner, "you 're all unnerved. Why don't you cut out booze, old man?"

"I have n't had but one drink to-day, honest, Kid," replied Ames, with a desperate effort at self-control.

"Well," said Tom as he seated himself at the table and dipped his pen in the ink, "how much do you need?"

"I—I think fifty would stand Anson off."

And as Tom proceeded, somewhat la-

boriously, for a college man, to write out the check, Ames rose quietly from his seat and looked over the other's shoulder, observing with painful minuteness every curve and stroke of the pen,—noticing especially the manner in which the name was signed at the bottom.

Tom, when he had finished, turned abruptly around, and saw the eager, anxious expression on his friend's face, but, in the innocence of his own guileless heart, attributed it to another, a wholly different cause.

"I can make it more, if you really need it, Ames."

"No, no," replied Ames hurriedly. "I owe you too much already. Thank you very much, Kid,—I 'll pay you some day. I swear I will. I must go now. Colton 's waiting for me, and I ——"

"Now, look here, Ames," broke in Tom with considerable impatience, "why don't you cut that fellow Colton out? I don't like to 'knock' a man, but they tell me there was n't a fellow in his class who would have anything to do with him when

he was in college. He—but there is no use repeating what he did then. You know what he is now,—simply a shark, hanging about looking for fool 'Freshies' who think it 's real college life to drink and gamble and make fools of themselves generally. He makes his living off the weakness of fellows like ——"

"Like me," interrupted Ames dolefully. "Oh, say it. But, Kid, Colton 's stood by me many times when I was down on my luck, and the other fellows would n't have—oh, Kid, it 's mean in me to talk this way, especially just after you 've been so good. But I 'm fearfully upset to-day, everything has gone wrong with me."

He made his way to the door, and, turning around, said, in a voice strangely broken, his face more haggard and worn than ever:

"You 've been awfully kind to me, Kid. I should n't have said what I did—but I—I don't think I 'm quite myself. Good-bye, old man."

"Good-bye."

And when the door had closed Tom dropped into a chair by the fireplace and proceeded to ruminate aloud.

"I wonder what he meant about that pretty Southern girl, Miss Thorne? I wonder——." He stared long and reflectively at the one andiron that still remained standing upright, and then, according to his habit, the habit of a good-natured, unsuspecting man who is always disposed to think the best, even of his enemies, shrugged his shoulders, and, dismissing the subject from his thoughts, leaned back in his chair with a comfortable, satisfied sigh.

"Any one would think," he muttered softly to himself, "that Clax and I were holding an all-day reception. And I wonder, by the way, when the girls will be here? Oh, Evelyn, Evelyn, what a corker you are!"

CHAPTER IV

"TOUCHING" TOM BROWN

SCARCELY had Tom drifted into his delightful revery when there came a modest knock at the door.

"What, again?" exclaimed Tom, but without changing his comfortable position. "It can't be the girls, for they would break in as if the house were afire. I wonder if it's another 'touch'? But no, Ames is the only one—Come in!"

The door opened softly, and on its threshold stood once more the meagre outlines of his previous visitor, Cartright, thin-haired, stoop-shouldered, and bespectacled as was his wont.

"Say, Brown, Madden, are you here?" he inquired, seeing no one, as Tom was completely buried in the deep, absorbing recesses of the arm-chair.

Tom strained his neck so that his head appeared around the back of the chair.

"Hello, Cartright," he exclaimed jovially, "come in and take a seat. I have n't seen you for half an hour."

Cartright smiled.

"Yes, I know it 's pretty tough on you, old man, for me to stay away so long—but I came to see Madden. Is he in?"

In involuntary reply to this question Madden stepped from his bedroom, where he had evidently been devoting considerable attention to his toilet, for he was very obviously "dressed up." He wore white shoes, a white cravat, a light flannel coat, white trousers, and in every way, as far as outward accoutrement went, appeared as the very harbinger of spring.

"Hello, Cartright,—glad to see you again. Say, boys, how do I look?"

"Great!" replied Tom enthusiastically, "you 'll make her fairly miserable if she thinks she can't possess you all at once in a lump."

"Well, maybe you 're right, Kid," replied Madden, rather dubiously. "I

wish I could have worn my sweater, though. Sweaters are awfully fetching, don't you think? I 've got a notion the girls like them tremendously."

"Yes," replied Tom laughing, "I think Edith is awfully fond of them, especially when they are covered with gasoline, the way yours was when you tried to fill the tank on our last country trip. Oh, it was a beaut!"

"Oh, dry up, Kid; you 've always got to make a man feel like an It. Well, I must be off, fellows—I 've got to find the ladies."

"Hold up a minute, Madden," cried Cartright, stepping into the centre of the room, and taking a note-book and pencil from his pocket. "As secretary for the Lend-a-Hand Club ——"

At this introduction both Tom and Madden threw up their hands, and the latter sank on the window seat in an attitude of abject dismay.

"How much?" inquired Madden, with mournful foreboding.

Cartright, taking no notice of this con-

certed pantomine, went on imperturbably:

"I came across a case of actual starvation the other day. Poor fellow from the South; parents ignorant mountain people in Tennessee. He was full of ambition —got a common school education, somehow,—taught a country school—educated his only sister, and when the old folks died sold out the little place for a few hundreds, and with his sister came up here to work his way through Harvard."

"Well," said Madden in a tone of manifest vexation, "why on earth did n't he stay at home and work on his farm? I tell you this education proposition is getting entirely too common. First thing you know we 'll have all the farmers and mechanics in the country swarming to college and working their way through, and then—" he stopped for a moment evidently seriously contemplating this complex problem in political economy— "and then—who the deuce is going to raise chickens and wheat and cotton and all that sort of thing? I 'm tired of having my leg pulled in order to help ambi-

tious backwoodsmen who come here with fifty cents and a writing pad and expect to get through college on them!"

Still Cartright paid no attention to the interruption. He was a genius at getting subscriptions, and would have made a success in life equally well as a missionary, a college president, or a fakir at a county fair. It was almost impossible to refrain from handing him over money when, as the college men said, he began his "spiel."

"He entered his sister at a school," he continued glibly, "gave her most of the money left of their joint inheritance, which enables her to live in a good boarding place, and then hid himself away in a garret on Sacramento Street. I found him there the other day in a positively starving condition. He had lived for three days on oatmeal and water."

"Oh, I sa-ay," interjected Tom with his accustomed drawl, "cut it mild, will you, old horse? Oatmeal and water,—that 's too much, too little, I mean."

"No, it 's a fact," went on Cartright,

waving his arms energetically, and beginning to pace up and down before the others as if he were addressing them from a platform. "I found him mighty sensitive and stand-offish at first, but I got round him after a while and fed him up and procured him some work to do. Maybe you would n't believe it, but do you know who he is?"

"Who?" inquired Tom and Madden in chorus.

"Why, it 's that fellow Thorne, whom I brought around to tutor you to-day, Madden. He needs any such little help badly. By the way, I trust you paid him, did n't you?"

A look of deep chagrin spread over Madden's face, which up to this time had worn a distinctly bored expression.

"Why, no, I have n't, Cartright. I 'm deucedly sorry, but the truth is, when Tom came in here and told me about— about the girls I forgot all about him. It was rotten rude of me, I admit. But, hang it all, a fellow has so much to think of. Say, put me down for twenty dol-

lars, and that's all I'll give, see?" Whereupon he sprang up and left the room, banging the door behind him. Cartright's eyes, however, shone with pleasure—the pleasure of having helped a fellow-creature in distress, and also of having made a successful "spiel." Having entered the name and amount carefully in his note-book, he turned and gazed at Tom searchingly.

"Well?" he asked.

"Well?" replied Tom coldly.

"I presume you don't feel inclined to imitate Madden's example this time, eh?"

Tom slowly rose from his seat and stepped to a cupboard on the wall, from which he proceeded to transfer a tea-kettle and lamp to the table.

"No," he drawled, "I can't say that I do."

"Oh, very well," said Cartright moving toward the door, "there's no reason why you should if you don't feel so inclined." He hesitated a moment, and looked yearningly at Tom, who was still

fussing with the tea-things, and then went on, a melodramatic pathos in his voice:

"He was actually starving, Brown. Really, no joke—oatmeal and water. But of course if you won't, why, you won't, and there 's an end to the matter." Having finished this subtle appeal he proceeded to fumble with the door-knob.

"Oh, I say," drawled Tom, "was he really? Now, don't be in a hurry, Cartright, you don't give a fellow a chance. Just wait a minute, will you?"

He went into his room and immediately reappeared with his wash-pitcher, from which he filled the tea-kettle. Then having restored the pitcher he came back and began to adjust the lamp.

"As I was saying when you interrupted me," he said in his slow, deliberate fashion, "I don't feel like imitating Madden's example, because I don't see what a few scattered donations like that are going to do if the man is as poor as you say. Must be something pretty decent in the fellow to take care of his sister like that." He drew back from the table and,

thrusting his hands into his trousers pocket, leaned against the mantel.

"I tell you, Cartright," he said, as if suddenly inspired, "I've got a better scheme. Suppose you make him a weekly allowance, whatever you think he can scrape along on, and—and charge it up to me?"

Even in his wildest dreams Cartright had not conjured up such generosity as this. He gazed at Tom in amazement, fearing first that he was joking, but Tom's perfectly serious face showed that he was undoubtedly in earnest. Cartright started toward him with outstretched hands.

"Brown—you can't mean it! Why, that is the noblest ——"

"Ah, cut it out," cried Tom in deep disgust. "I guess I don't deserve so much credit, after all. The truth of the matter is that when this fellow Thorne was here a while ago I treated him like a dog, I'm afraid. Yes, I acted like a brute—like a downright cad; almost told him to get out of the room. So you see I'm just

easing up my conscience a bit, that 's all."

"Well," returned Cartright after making the inevitable memorandum in his note-book, "all I can say is you 're doing a might generous act, and Thorne is just the kind of fellow that will take proper advantage of it. More than that, he 'll be eternally grateful to you and I feel sure he 'll pay you back, too. He 's just that sort of a fellow."

"Now, look here, Cartright," cried Tom in very genuine alarm, "the only condition upon which I will do this thing is that you will not tell Thorne a word about it, nor any one else, for that matter. Man alive! If I keep on getting known here at college as a bona fide, sure-thing Easy Mark, my father will think I 'm running a harem, and then it 'll all be off. Give me your word, old man, that you won't tell a soul of this offer."

"Well," said Cartright reluctantly, as he extended his hand, "I 'll promise if you wish, of course. But really, Brown——"

"Ah, forget it, I tell you! Don't let me hear any more about it."

Cartright walked over to the door, opened it, stepped out into the hall, and then poked his head back into the room, his colorless complexion, sparse hair, and eyes peering through the thick lenses of his spectacles causing him to look almost like a creature from another planet.

"Anyhow," he said, as a parting shot, "I insist on it, it 's a blame fine thing you 're doing, all the same."

In exasperation Tom ran to the fireplace, seized the poker, and rushed across to the door, which Cartright with a laugh of derision banged in his face. Bent on revenge Tom twisted the knob and opened the door with a jerk and—almost thrust the poker into the face of a remarkably pretty girl who stood, apparently in great embarrassment, on the threshold.

Tom drew back in astonishment and allowed the poker to droop slowly down to his side, while he gazed at his visitor as if transfixed. She was of a typical brunette Southern type, her dark eyes, sensitive

mouth and chin denoting a character subject to the sway of strong emotion. She was dressed inexpensively, but in excellent taste, and, taken all in all, she made a very desirable object to look upon. At least so thought Tom, who, after he had feasted his eyes and had recovered sufficiently from his surprise, was the first to speak.

"Ah—ah—Miss Thorne, I believe?" he drawled eventually.

The girl spoke quickly, with the nervous embarrassment of one who fears surveillance or discovery, and her words were marked by a very decided, though for that reason fascinating, Southern accent.

"Mr. Brown," she replied, "I—I was about to knock when—when—" she laughed unmirthfully. "I know you will think it is strange for me to come here, alone, but—I was told—Is Mr. Ames here?"

"No," replied Tom reassuringly, with an intuition that his visitor was in some trouble and that he must sympathize with her and console her. "He was here a while ago; but won't you—er—come in?"

She hesitated, looking cautiously about, and stepped gingerly across the threshold.

"I suppose—I—should n't."

"Yes, oh, yes, of course you should n't —no, I mean, come in—it 's all right. What 's the matter?"

The girl's lips quivered with agitation, and she breathed in quick gasps as though she had been running.

"I know it 's not proper to come to a student's room alone, but, Mr. Brown—there 's something—a favor, I want to ask of you. I know you 're Wilton's—Mr. Ames's best friend. He has told me how good you 've been to him."

"Oh, come now, Miss Thorne," replied Tom soothingly, and quickly closing the door, "don't say that—I 've never done anything that another fellow would n't have done under the same circumstances if he 'd had the chance."

"Oh, Mr. Brown," she went on impulsively, "I 'm so worried about him. He—he is drinking all the time, and—and I have n't seen him for days and days, and I must, I simply must see him."

There were tears in her eyes now, and Tom felt his heart swell with a great pity for her. Ames! This beautiful creature was worrying about Ames! It seemed too bad.

"I want you to ask him," she said, speaking low, and with a faltering voice, "to meet me to-night—he knows where. I can't go to his house or send a note—his people look down upon me, and they would be angry if they knew ——"

"If they knew!" exclaimed Tom.

"Oh, Mr. Brown, I am so miserable,—I—I——"

Here she broke down utterly and fell to her knees on the floor in a tempest of emotion.

"Oh, don't ask any questions," she sobbed, "only find him and send him to me!"

"Oh, I say, Miss Thorne, you must n't."

"Oh, let me cry," she went on, seizing him by the hand and clinging to it as if for protection from some threatened dan-

ger—"I am so miserable—so very, very wretched."

The birds were still merrily chirping in the budding tree outside the window. The slanting rays of the setting sun flooded the room with the glorious promise of reawakening nature. The subtle, pervading freshness of spring was in the air, and the whole world seemed delicious, entrancing,—like a sweet haunting melody. But as Tom looked down at this poor creature at his side and attempted to raise her, to comfort her, he felt that for her, at least, the joy of spring was but a cruel, empty mockery.

CHAPTER V

MADDEN AND TOM ENTERTAIN

WHEN Madden reached the street he met Happy Thurston and Tubby Anderson in the automobile, just drawing up in front of the door.

"Hello," he cried, "Where 's Jean?"

"We left him down in the yard," replied Tubby, "he had a date with a grind."

"What? One more unfortunate? Well, say, boys, I want you to help me find the ladies and then come back and take a little tea."

"We won't be butting in?" asked Thurston anxiously.

"Not a bit;—and then you know, Happy, Evelyn will be there, and you and Tom can do another sprint. Why, it 's more exciting than a 'varsity race to

see the way you two chumps are rushing that girl."

"Chumps, eh?" repeated Thurston in derision, as Madden got aboard the machine, "how about Edith Sinclair?"

"Oh," replied Madden solemnly, "that's an entirely different affair."

The other two laughed boisterously.

"And, talking about Edith," continued Madden, "I imagine she's down at Mrs. Ames's. I believe Tom said so, didn't he? Drive down there, Tubby."

The big touring car, with the corpulent Tubby Anderson as chauffeur, started ahead with a jerk and a loud, quick snapping of the exhaust, and then glided smoothly and swiftly down an avenue lined on either side with immense elms.

In a few minutes they had stopped before a typical Cambridge private residence, sitting back comfortably in a pretty yard, shut off from the street by a dense hedge. Madden alighted and was about to go in for his guests when Tubby gave a squeeze of the horn bulb, and simultaneously the front door opened and three

women made their appearance. One of them, who appeared to be the youngest, immediately ran lightly down the walk and held out her hand to Madden, who seized it as if it had been a gem beyond all price.

"Oh, Mr. Madden," exclaimed the girl, "it was so good of you to come for us in the automobile. We 're all so very fatigued, you know, and I really don't see how we could have walked those three long blocks without some kind of help." The glorious sparkle in her eyes, the bright color in her cheeks, the health and heartiness that characterized her whole being, the nimble speed with which she had run down the walk, did not exactly bear out any suggestion of invalidism; but Madden was in that frame of mind, toward this particular creature, when he was inclined to take things literally, and he began to formulate a reply that would be exquisitely expressive of his sympathy.

"Er—er—why, I 'm very glad, Miss Sinclair, if—er—er." But when he had got that far the others had arrived on the

sidewalk. One of them, Mrs. Ames, was a sweet, motherly woman, to whom her son, despite his marks of dissipation, bore a strong resemblance. The other was a somewhat demure-looking girl, whose beautiful gray eyes, however, betrayed a keen sense of humor and a genuine enjoyment of life as lived by a pretty girl in a college town.

"How do you do, Mr. Madden," greeted Mrs. Ames. "Mr. Anderson and Mr. Thurston, too, I am glad to see you. Edith, you are getting to be a worse romp every day. The idea of your running ahead of us in that way,—it is perfectly scandalous. Well, Mr. Madden, here we are again for some of your delicious tea. These girls are making me frivolous in my old age. I 've come to feel quite lost if I don't get to your Thursday afternoons."

"Oh,—ah, Mrs. Ames, we are always —er—er ——"

"He means to say," interrupted Tubby, after he and Thurston had shaken hands all around, and while the latter was

already deeply engaged in a conversation with Evelyn, "he means to say, if you 'll allow me to interpret, that he 'll be overjoyed if you 'll kindly step into the car so that we can take you around to his rooms."

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Ames, somewhat aghast—"all of us get into the car at once—six of us?"

"Oh, it 's nothing," replied Tubby reassuringly, giving her his hand and helping her to a seat in the rear, "we 've had nine on board many a time, and could crowd even more in if it came to a pinch."

"And it will come to a pinch," laughed Edith, as she took a seat next to Mrs. Ames. "Come Evelyn, all aboard, the train is about to start."

Thurston having performed the agreeable duty of placing Evelyn next to her friend, the three young men crowded together in front, and with a merry "kronk, kronk," the big machine was again under way.

"You must n't notice Madden," said Tubby, crooking his head over his

shoulder, "if he seems slightly confused. He 's working hard now under a 'grind,' and I think his mind 's affected."

"Dry up, Tubby," whispered Madden to his friend, "don't you try to be funny."

"Oh, dear! I hope not, Mr. Madden. You really must n't study too hard. You might become ill, don't you know, and just think how badly your services are needed on the crew."

At this solicitous appeal Thurston and Tubby doubled up and grew red in the face with suppressed laughter.

"We 're doing the best we can with him, Mrs. Ames," said Tubby, as soon as he was able to speak. "Even to-day, we had occasion to help him not study quite as hard."

"Now really," began Madden, turning around and facing the rear seat, "really, I—er—er——"

But by this time they had reached their destination. Almost before the car stopped Evelyn jumped out, and, running lightly across the pavement, cried:

"I 'll beat you this time, Edith."

Edith was about to take up the challenge when she was peremptorily halted by Mrs. Ames.

"Edith, stop! I won't have any more of such tomboy conduct. Evelyn—come back!"

But Evelyn had disappeared in the doorway, and was already running breathlessly up the stairs, leaving the others to follow at a more formal gait.

When she reached the landing two floors above, she gave a little hurried knock on the door, and then opening it gently, stepped quietly inside. No sooner had she done so, however, than she drew back with a gasp of surprise.

And well she might be surprised, for there, in the centre of the room, stood Tom, his arms clasped about Miss Thorne, whom he was apparently holding in a close, an affectionate embrace.

"Oh!" The exclamation came from Evelyn involuntarily, and she leaned back with one hand against the wall for support. Marian hastily disengaged herself, drew her veil over her face, and fairly

ran past Evelyn out of the room, leaving Tom staring after her blankly,—still more blankly when, for the first time, he caught sight of the girl whom he loved best in all the world, staring at him with an expression of hopeless astonishment.

For a few seconds there was a silence, broken only by the distant sound of those who were ascending the stairs. Then—

"Oh, I say," drawled Tom in almost speechless dismay, thrusting his hands deep into his trousers pockets as the full significance of the situation dawned upon him.

"Tom Brown!" exclaimed Evelyn, in a horrified whisper.

"But, Evelyn," cried Tom, making an impulsive step toward her, "I can explain."

"You owe me no explanation, I 'm sure," replied Evelyn freezingly.

"Oh, but, Evelyn, give a fellow a chance. Listen, I was only ——"

"Shh!" whispered Evelyn warningly. "The others are here!"

Once more the door opened, and Mad-

den entered with Mrs. Ames, followed by the rest of the party.

"Well, Evelyn," said Edith, "it was n't a bit fair. I know I could have beaten you, only your mother would n't let me run."

"Evelyn, my dear," said Mrs. Ames in a matter-of-fact tone of reproof, "I 'm quite shocked at you, quite shocked. It is perfectly scandalous for you to behave so. The idea! Running up-stairs unchaperoned to a student's room. Well, Tom, dear boy," she went on, somewhat irrelevantly, and giving him her hand, "I 'm very glad to see you. You can fancy how much we enjoy your charming teas from the way Evelyn ran up the stairs so as to be first."

"Ah, yes," replied Tom absently, with his mind still on Evelyn, who by this time was again monopolized by the industrious Thurston. "What 'll you have to drink? Er—er, I beg pardon, I mean, I 'm so—I 'm so glad you could come. Clax, get out the tea-things like a good fellow, will you?"

Madden obediently set to work to get the cups and saucers, abstracting them from various unsuspected places, including the bookshelf, the drawers of the desk and table, from underneath the window seat, and from the mysterious recesses of the two bedrooms. While he was engaged in this interesting occupation, Tubby lent a hand at setting the table, thereby giving ample evidence that he was not obliged to earn money during the summer months by acting as a waiter.

"You 'll serve for us, won't you, Mrs. Ames?" asked Tom as he took her wrap. He also tried to take Evelyn's, but that young lady turned from him deliberately, and handed it to Thurston, with whom she was apparently absorbed in a most desperate flirtation. Tom gazed at them in an agony of despairing fascination, a fascination so engrossing that, oblivious to everything else, he presently found himself politely holding Mrs. Ames's wrap for her to put it on again.

"Why, Tom," said Mrs. Ames, whose motherly instinct soon apprised her of

the situation, "you don't want me to go right away again, do you?"

"Oh," said Tom, deeply mortified, "I beg your pardon. Of course not, of course not—I was—I was merely thinking of ——"

But here poor Tom got to the end of his rope, and in his confusion doubled Mrs. Ames's wrap into a compact ball and stowed it carefully under her chair, at the same time keeping an eagle eye on the conduct of Evelyn and Thurston.

"Oh, Mr. Thurston," said Evelyn, with the very obvious intention of being overheard by Tom, "Edith and I watched your crew practice on the river to-day from her back window on Beacon Street, and really, you know, I think rowing men are ever so much more attractive than any other class of athletes. They look so lovely in their—their uniforms."

"Why, Evie," cried Edith in surprise, "last year you simply would n't look at a man who did n't go in for football."

"Oh, well, you see," broke in Tom, regaining his assurance and once more

speaking with his accustomed drawl, "that was last year, and I had n't gone in for rowing then."

"You flatter yourself, Mr. Brown," retorted Evelyn coldly.

"Why should n't I? I don't notice anybody else throwing bouquets my way."

"Well," said Mrs. Ames, "it 's the duty of all of us to be enthusiastic over the rowing men, now that the English crew is coming. We should n't be patriotic otherwise."

"Of course we 'll beat them, won't we Mr. Madden?" inquired Evelyn.

"Oh, I don't know. They have n't been beaten yet, but Harvard never had so good a crew as this year."

"Mrs. Ames," said Thurston, who evidently preferred confining the conversation as much as possible to a personal channel, "I just managed to get through calculus."

"Is that so?" inquired Tom, promptly "butting in," "who sat next to you?"

Both Evelyn and Thurston turned around and endeavored to squelch Tom

with a look of withering scorn. The latter, however, appeared to bear the ordeal manfully.

"But," resumed Thurston to his companion in a confiding tone, "I 'm going to work hard next year ——"

"Why, old man," inquired Tom anxiously, "are n't you coming back to college?"

"The faculty," went on Thurston, paying no attention to these irrelevant interruptions, "the faculty seem pleased with the work I did last half and ——"

"Yes," remarked Tom, "they 're so pleased that they are going to give him an encore on his Junior year."

"Say, Kid," snapped out Thurston in some heat, "you 're full of dry humor, are n't you?"

"Yes, but the trouble is it 's so very dry. I always have to pay for the drinks to get any one to listen to it. I say, Mrs. Ames, the kettle 's boiling—will you sit here?"

Mrs. Ames took her place at the head of the table, and began to make the tea.

"Do you think, Mr. Madden," she inquired, "that my son will get a place on the crew?"

The men stared at her in amazement, even Tom losing for the moment his jovial, bantering expression.

"What!" replied Madden, "Wilton—Wilton—er—er—make the crew?"

"Oh, you need n't all look so surprised," said Evelyn, coming to her mother's defence. "Wilton rows just beautifully. Why, he used to go awfully fast when he took me out on the river summer nights, and it was a much heavier boat than those shells you use. I think it 's a perfect shame if they don't let Wilton row."

"Well—er—Miss Ames, I don't believe Wilton will stand for the training."

"Yes," said Mrs. Ames, as she poured out the tea and handed the cups to the ever obliging Tubby, "I 'm afraid the poor boy is studying too hard."

At this one of the cups Tubby was carrying toppled over and the steaming

hot brew landed on his leg, just above the knee.

"Oh, ouch!" he exclaimed as the cup in the other hand fell to the floor with a crash. "Gee whiz, that's hot!"

"Look here, Tubby," said Tom, "do you think we run a crockery store? Clax, that makes the seventh cup in two weeks —and now there aren't enough to go around. I guess you and I will have to use shaving mugs."

"There's something curiously changed about Wilton," resumed Mrs. Ames while Madden disappeared for the mugs. "Don't you think so, Evie?"

"Yes," replied the daughter, "he seems so tired all the time, poor fellow. You see he goes over to Boston every night to study with a friend over there at the Parker House. They take late lunches at night, and in the morning he simply can't eat a bit of breakfast, he has worked so hard."

Poor Tubby, who had taken a mouthful of tea, began to choke and splutter in a most disgraceful fashion, to such an ex-

tent, indeed, that Tom was obliged to give him a kick of admonition.

"I 'm quite worried about him," continued Mrs. Ames. "And, Tom, I 'm going to scold you and the other boys a little. When Wilton came home the other night I happened to be up, and—he—was a little affected by that strong punch you gave him, telling the poor innocent fellow it was claret lemonade. I don't object to a joke, but really, Tom, I was surprised that you should have thought it funny to get Wilton that way."

Tom looked at her, his face red with embarrassment, not unmixed with indignation.

"Did he tell you that—er—about that?"

"Yes, because I insisted upon knowing where he had been; but he shielded you all he could. There 's nothing mean about Wilton."

Here the unfortunate Tubby exploded again, letting fly a mouthful of tea in all directions, in a most indecorous, reprehensible manner. Tom and Thurston and

Madden came heroically to his rescue, pounding him on the back, grinning expansively the while.

"I 'm beginning to think we don't know Mr. Brown as well as we thought we did," remarked Evelyn, after the row had subsided and Tubby was able to sit up and take notice.

"Well," responded Tom, "I 'm sure I 've tried in every way to have you 'get next' to me."

During the laugh that followed this brilliant sally, there was a knock at the door.

"Come in," shouted Madden.

The door opened slowly, disclosing a short fat man, of very obvious German extraction, wearing a somewhat seedy uniform and carrying a clarinet under his arm.

"Hello, Schneider," cried Tom. "Come in. Ladies, allow me to present Herr Fritz Schneider, of Schneider's Brass Band of three, private musicians to the Goolash Club."

"Oh," cried Evelyn clapping her hands

and pulling the somewhat astonished musician into the room, "we 've heard of you, Mr. Schneider. I 'm so glad to meet you. Now you can tell us just what the men do at the Goolash Club, won't you?"

"Schneider," interrupted Tom, "I suppose you 've come to collect your bill. Remember—silence is golden."

Herr Schneider, still apparently somewhat dazed, looked about him in mute inquiry.

"Ach Gott, yes, Mister Kit," he said at length, "I should n't say noddings—aber, die junge Fräulein—die schoene, junge Fräulein—how can I refuse a laty, yet, what?"

"Oh," laughed Tom, "you giddy young thing; I should n't have thought it of you. By the way, Schneider, while we 're all here, what do you say to a dance? Spiel us a waltz, old man."

"Wass iss?" inquired Schneider, "you wish I should a valse make right here yet?"

"Yah, das iss," replied Tom.

Herr Schneider, to whom the vagaries

of college students were evidently somewhat familiar accepted the situation philosophically, and, after seating himself gingerly on the edge of a chair, started up an old-fashioned Dutch waltz.

"Oh, what fun!" exclaimed Edith as she was whisked away by Madden. Tom made for Evelyn but that young lady, casting upon him a glance of inexpressible hauteur, consigned herself to the tender mercies of the delighted and triumphant Thurston. Tubby Anderson, having no one for a partner, made the best of a bad job by removing the table-cloth, tying it around his waist as a skirt, and giving a fairly clever imitation of the Dutch style of waltzing, at the same time aiding and abetting Herr Schneider's clarinet by singing the tune in an extremely nasal bass. Tom, who was bound to be cheerful despite the spurning he had received at the hands of his beloved, mounted the window seat and proceeded to beat time with all the energy and enthusiasm of a conductor who has a symphony orchestra at his command.

It was while performing thus, to the great delight of Mrs. Ames, who was fairly convulsed with laughter, that Tom chanced to glance out of the window. In an instant his whole demeanor changed.

"Stop!" he cried.

There was something so odd, so unusual, so excited in his manner, that all were quiet in a moment, even Tubby sobering sufficiently to ask:

"What 's the row, Kid?"

Tom jumped down from the window-seat and stared wildly at the door, as if he had suddenly lost his senses. Quickly pulling himself together, however, he stepped up to Thurston and Tubby, and seizing them by the shoulder pushed them toward Madden's room.

"Oh, I say," he exclaimed, losing for once his habitual drawl, "I 've just thought of a game—a new game I learned last week. It 'll beat dancing all hollow. Get into Madden's room quick," he urged, as he pushed the girls also toward the door, "all of you. It 's the funniest thing you ever heard of. But you must

be quick,—quick! Yes—you too, Mrs. Ames, it 'll be spoiled if any one of you stays out." And so, laughing and talking and pushing and persuading, in an incredibly short time he had herded them all inside and locked the door, whereupon he rushed to the window and leaned far out.

"Oh, the fool! the fool!" he exclaimed, drawing his head back into the room. "He 's coming up here! Here, Schneider," he cried to the musician who, during the recent manœuvres had been staring stupidly at Tom, his clarinet still held to his lips, "here 's the money I owe you; now out—get out—quick."

"Wass iss—you vant no more spiel ——"

But Tom, in order to remove all doubts as to his meaning, seized Herr Schneider by the back of the neck and fairly lifted him out of the room.

At this point a tremendous clatter and pounding was set up on Madden's door.

"Here, Kid," exclaimed Madden, "what the devil did you lock us up for?"

Tom ran excitedly over to Madden's door.

"Be quiet, Clax, will you? You 'll spoil the whole thing. You can't come in until I 'm ready."

Scarcely had he finished speaking when the hall door opened, and Ames entered, his face flushed, his hair dishevelled, his eyes staring wildly,—hopelessly, terribly drunk.

CHAPTER VI

TOM BROWN'S LITTLE JOKE

AMES staggered over to a couch and fell on it in a state of utter collapse, slowly weaving his body to and fro and looking stupidly at the floor, while Tom gazed at him in an agony of anxiety.

"Ames—Wilton—for God's sake, man," he whispered, his voice hoarse with the tensity of his agitation, "your mother and sister are here. Go to the club, I 'll follow you. Come," he pleaded, placing his hand on Ames's elbow and vainly attempting to help him to his feet.

"She 's followin' me," mumbled Ames, in his old whining tone, and beginning to shed maudlin tears. "Marian Thorne—poor girl—she 's followin' me. Must n' see me like this. You mus' help me—gotto help me, Brown."

He lurched forward and would have fallen to the floor had not Tom caught him by the shoulder and thrust him back on the couch.

"Listen, do you hear?" again whispered Tom. "Your mother and sister are locked up in that room—in Madden's room. They must n't see you here. Can't you understand?"

Ames made a feeble effort to rise, and then sank back in a drunken daze on the couch.

"Wha' 's the joke? Mother and sister locked up? Wha' 's you givin' me?" And then, burying his face in his hands, he moaned: "I'm desp'rate, Kid,—desp'rate. I 'm goin' kill myself. There 's that girl, Kid—sweetes' girl ——" But he could go no further. Overwhelmed by the liquor he had drunk, deprived of the power to speak, or to think, or to move, he fell over on the couch in a state of utter, of hopeless collapse.

"Ames, oh, for God's sake, Ames," begged Tom piteously, "listen, will you—you must get out of here." In the frenzy

of his desperation he shook the other by the shoulder violently, but his body merely moved helplessly to and fro—a human derelict foundered with drink.

"I say there, Kid," shouted Madden from the confines of his room, "how much longer is this joke going to last?"

And then there was resumed the heavy pounding on the door.

Tom looked about him wildly, at his wit's end; and then, seized by a sudden inspiration, he pulled the insensible Ames off to the floor, and with a mighty effort pushed him under the couch and pulled the drapery down in front. It was a desperate expedient, perhaps, but for the moment it was successful, as not a sign of his unwelcome visitor was visible. He had risen to his feet and was about to step over to Madden's room when the hall door opened suddenly and once more Marian Thorne stood there on the threshold, pale, trembling, as agitated as himself.

"Where is he?" she cried, "I saw him come in here—Wilton Ames."

"Go away!" exclaimed Tom, almost

brusque in his excitement—"I 'll send him to you. Go away, I tell you, you must leave at once!"

But the girl stepped doggedly into the room.

"I won't go away until I see him. Why, oh, why do you keep him from me? He is in one of these rooms." She stepped swiftly across towards Madden's door, but when the pounding on it was resumed with renewed vigor, she shrank back in terror.

"Shh!" cried Tom, seizing her by the arm and leading her to his own room. "Go in there. Wait until they are gone and you shall see him. Trust me. For God's sake, woman, go, go!"

He thrust her inside, closed the door on her, and rushed over to his chum's room. The pounding had now taken on a facetious character, in imitation of the rhythmical beat of a drum. Unlocking the door, Tom darted over to the couch and threw himself down upon it, making a supreme effort to summon up an appearance of unconcern.

"Come in!" he shouted.

The door burst open with a bang and the newly released prisoners rushed out into the larger room, looking about expectantly.

"What is it, Kid?" cried Tubby in a fever of anticipation, "where 's the joke —what 's the name?"

Tom looked up at them with an assumption of his old cheerfulness:

"Why, don't you people know," he drawled, "that this is the first of April?"

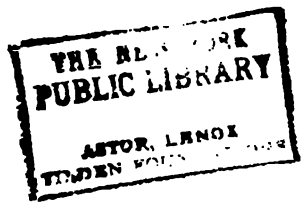
With a simultaneous movement, the entire party collapsed into the most available seats. As for Tubby, he fell from his seat to the floor and rolled over and over, very much like a human barrel.

"Sold!" he cried in a tone of exquisite anguish, "sold again!"

For a moment they sat staring at Tom blankly. Then Madden, suddenly springing from his chair, seized his chum's arms from behind and dragged him from the couch.

"What 'll we do with him, boys?" he shouted, "how 'll we get even?"

"Why, don't you people know," he drawled, "that this is the first of April?"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"I tell you," replied Evelyn gayly, "let's lock him up in his own room until after vespers, and see how he likes the first of April!"

"No, no!" cried Tom struggling desperately to free himself from Madden's powerful grasp. "No, please, please don't."

His protestations, however, had the effect of adding fuel to the fire.

"Just the thing," cried Tubby gleefully, as he and Thurston also seized Tom by a convenient member and began pushing and pulling him towards his room.

"No, fellows—" exclaimed Tom furiously, "I say, darn it all, not there."

Evelyn, brimming over with laughter, ran ahead of the struggling mass, and threw the door to Tom's room open wide. Then she stopped still, rigid with amazement, as she beheld Marian Thorne standing in the doorway.

For an instant there was an intense silence, the men releasing their grip of Tom and staring at the apparition, in a paralysis of astonishment, until at length

Marian, confused, frightened, dismayed, closed the door in their faces.

Tubby was the first to break the painful silence, but his effort proved a feeble one.

"What the deuce!" he ejaculated, and then stopped short in helpless amazement.

Mrs. Ames walked over to Evelyn, who seemed about to faint, and placed her arm about her waist.

"Come, Evelyn,—Edith,—I am afraid we have staid a trifle too long. Mr. Anderson, Mr. Thurston, will you join us? I fear we need an escort here."

As the party moved out of the room, Tom cried out bitterly:

"Evelyn—oh, Evelyn—it was all,—only ——"

But Evelyn, not deigning to notice him, had disappeared with the others through the doorway. Madden also had taken up his hat to accompany his guests to the street, but he turned around abruptly and stepping up to Tom placed his arm affectionately on his shoulder.

"Kid," he said kindly, "I know it 's all

some damn beastly mistake—you know I know it, old man. I 'll get out of the way so that you can clear things up. But —if I can do anything for you, Kid," he added, and his voice was strangely choked as he spoke, " you 'll let me know it, old man, won't you? "

" Yes, Clax," replied Tom vacantly, " of course I know you believe in me. But—but you better go, old man, and— and see the ladies home."

Madden seized his chum's hand in a firm grip, and then hurried out after the others.

Left alone, Tom sank limply back into the arm-chair and stared, like one in a daze, over toward the couch, under which lay the unconscious instrument of all his misery.

" Oh, wake up, Tom Brown," he muttered wofully to himself, " wake up, old man, or turn over. You 're sleeping on your back! "

CHAPTER VII.

DROWNING MISERY

FOR exactly two weeks after the incident of the vanishing lady in the bedroom Tom went about in a state of such abject dolor that it seemed almost as if he were on the verge of collapse. The suddenness, the wholly unexpected complication of the situation in which he had found himself, the fact of his own innocence and of Evelyn's apparent lack of confidence in him, and above all the unfailing conviction that he must not under any circumstances betray either Marian or Ames,—all these things weighed down on him with the crushing force of an overwhelming burden. At the end of that period, however, the natural exuberance of spirits, aided and abetted by the inspiriting influence of the season, by his youth,

and by the panacea of time itself, caused him to suspect that perhaps, after all, the world was not quite so black as it seemed, and that a day might eventually arrive when he would once more be restored to the good graces of his sweetheart. He had not seen her for five consecutive days. She had returned the engagement ring which he had given her early in the first half-year, and yet he had advanced so far in his convalescence at the end of the two weeks as to be able to sit on the steps of the old dormitory, Holworthy, in the delicious air of the April afternoon, and, in company with Madden and Tubby and Thurston and others of his "crowd," endeavor to drown the tumult of his agony in songs—songs of pathos, songs of love, songs of the troubadour, songs of the minstrel end-man, rag-time songs, hymns, two-steps, medleys, glees, madrigals,—in fact, the whole gamut to which the college man is exposed under the seductive influence of soft caressing spring, and of a soul that can soar high above the petty trials of earth.

"I say, fellows," said Tubby during an interlude in this impromptu performance, the while he sat at the base of a tree with his chubby shoulders to its trunk, the back of his head reposing tenderly in the palms of his clasped hands, and a "dead" pipe sagging unbeautifully from the corner of his mouth, causing him to indulge in an occasional unwonted lisp, "there 's a chap lives over in Stoughton who 's invented a scheme for studying so 's you won't have to—to study at all."

Instead of gibbering hilariously at the very palpable paradox of Tubby's statement, his auditors looked at him with surprised interest. For some occult reason, Anderson's announcement seemed to strike them, one and all, in a tender spot.

"No, honest, Tubby," inquired Madden anxiously—"you 're not joshing, old man, are you?"

"Not a bit of it," replied Tubby earnestly, removing the pipe for the greater effectiveness of his speech—"I 've seen it, but I 've never tried it on. Why, it 's

simple—very simple. The thing is a sort of phonograph, fixed up so as to run by a motor as long as you want it. Whatever you want to study is put down on different records—astronomy, chem., history, math., lit., geology 4, anything you like."

"How do you work it?" asked Madden, who seemed to be especially interested when the subject of astronomy was mentioned.

"Why, it's a cinch," replied Tubby; "all you got to do is to slap on your record, turn out the light, lie down in bed or on the floor, pull a string, and the thing sails away smooth as grease. It 'll repeat itself for ten hours, so that you 're bound to go asleep before it gets through."

"Well, what's the good of that?" asked Madden with some disappointment, "if you 're sure to fall asleep, what 's the use? Quit your kidding, Tubby."

"No kidding at all; why, pshaw! man," said Tubby, looking at Madden with contempt writ large on his round face, "did n't you ever hear of unconscious cerebration?"

Madden appeared somewhat dazed, and said nothing.

"I tell you," insisted Tubby warmly, "it 's great. It works while you sleep. Yes, sir, for a fact. The constant grinding away of that thing will fix the lesson on anybody's mind—even on yours, Clax, and in the morning when you wake up you 'll have the whole business at the end of your tongue and—why—when it comes to exams. you can go in and knock the prof's eye out."

Madden cocked his head toward his friend dubiously, half tempted to ask for an introduction to the inventor of this ingenious device, but an irrepressible twinkle in Tubby's eye gave him pause, and fearing, from a long and profitable experience, that he was about to be "sold" in order to gratify Tubby's sense of humor, he prudently kept mum.

"By the way, fellows," interposed Thurston, "I heard a good one on Professor Cook to-day—you know—Slimy Cook, up at the chem. lab. You know how awful fond he is of joshing the men,

"I tell you," insisted Tubby warmly, "it's great!"

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punning, and all that sort of thing—thinks he 's the funniest thing that happened since Mark Twain. Well, there 's a new ' grind ' in our section—a big tall fellow, about a mile high, mostly bones. His name 's Slack. Never saw such a bunch of bones in your life; looks like an animated relic of the mastodon period."

"Ah, cut it short, Happy," cried Tubby with a considerable show of impatience. " Where does the joke come in? "

" Well, this chap—this bony one, you know—comes from the backwoods somewhere, so when Slimy had him up on his feet in classroom, Slimy asks him, in that funny way he has of lisping through his nose: ' Mr. Sthlack,—how do you *Sthlack* lime? ' "

" Old Slimy thought he had worked off a beaut and turned to the men for sympathy and appreciation, but quick as a wink, his bony giblets from the backwoods comes back at him.

" How do you Slack lime, sir? " he repeats very slowly and impressively, " why, —*Cook* it, sir."

"Well, you ought to 'a' heard that bunch roar! Old Slimy has n't got over it yet. They say it feazed him so he could n't get on with his lecture,—and no wonder. The subject was 'calcium oxide.'"

"Good for his Bonelets," said Jean de Reszke gleefully. "It 's time somebody called Slimy's bluffs. He had his guard down then for fair. But say, fellows, did you ever hear of Dr. Beckwith—you know, 'Becky'—getting done up?"

The men sat quiet, bending their energies to the effort of solemn recollection.

"Why, I sa-ay," drawled Tom, after a moment of silence, "I never heard of Becky *getting done up,* but I 've heard of lots of fellows who *tried* it."

"That 's just it," continued Jean enthusiastically, "they try it, and get left every time. I remember one day, Sophomore year, when a lot of us got to class ahead of time, and smeared the cushion of his chair all over with mucilage. Then we all sat down, still as death, and waited for Beck to come in and attach himself to

the glue. Pretty soon he trots along with his bald head and glasses, and that kind of innocent way he has, as if he never suspected anybody of being anything but an angel. We thought we had him sure and almost died trying to hold in and keep from laughing. You know how Beck talks—with that broad A of his that would make a Britisher look like a two-spot; well, sir, he stepped right up on the platform, walked over to the chair, tipped the cushion upside down, and says to the bunch, like a man asking the way to the courthouse: 'Did the clahss think I was such a blahsted ahss as to sit down in the mucilage?' And I 've never found out to this day how he discovered the joke.

"The fellows felt pretty sore about it, anyhow. They had expected to bust their gizzards laughing when Becky landed on the cushion, but the only satisfaction they got was to see the mucilage dripping down through the holes in the seat of the chair, while Beck just handed out Greek moods and tenses and roots until you could n't rest. It was a mean

sort of revenge, and we decided to get even.

"So the next day we appointed a committee of ways and means, and delegated them to go around to the classroom and fix that door so it could n't be opened for a considerable space of period. The committee was faithful to its trust. I was chairman, and I took along a hammer and chisel, and about a bale of cotton. We packed the cotton in good and tight in the keyhole with the chisel, and then squirted water on it so it would freeze over night. Cold? You bet it was cold. It was the middle of February, and there must have been skating down as far as the equator.

"Well, we lined up once more and waited for Beck to come along and try to unlock that bunch of cement, of course figuring that he could n't do it, and we could get a little well-deserved recreation from those damned Greek irregulars.

"In about five minutes he comes along, same as ever, pretending not to notice the bunch of us who had lined up on the stair-

case leading to the next floor, waiting for our cinch to hatch out. Well, sir, for a time, we thought we had him groggy. He tried the handle of the door and found it locked, and then pulled out a bunch of keys, and tried to poke one into that mess of frozen cotton. He might as well have tried to punch a hole in the side of a battleship with a thimble. Nothing doing. By that time we were just hugging ourselves, partly from joy, and partly to keep warm, for it was getting most confoundedly cold. But just as we were enjoying ourselves to the limit, Beck sizes us up through his glasses and says:

"'I regret to tell the clahss that I 've brought the wrong key. Consequently, I shall be obliged to hold the recitation here in the hallway.'

"With that he backs up to the steam radiator at the foot of the stairs, where it was good and warm, and, sir, he held us there for the full hour sitting on the steps, shivering to beat the band, while we flunked from alpha to omega, because of course not a son-of-a-gun of us had

even looked at the lesson. You never saw such a lot of frozen Greek roots in your life! It was a low-down trick, I say," added Jean somewhat ruefully, as his companions grinned at the conclusion of his recital; "why, suppose we had got pneu ——"

At this moment, however, there was an interruption. An elderly man of a pronounced Russian-Jewish type, with a long unkempt beard and a faded, dinkey brown derby hat settled down well over his ears, stepped up to the crowd of students, with his hands outspread, palms upward, in characteristic fashion.

"Oh, look here, Bones," said Madden in a tone of disgust, "you just move on. You 're trying to butt in on Max Keezer's monopoly."

"But, chentlemen," replied the intruder pleadingly, "ain't you got nodding you vant to sell?"

"Now, look here, Bones, old sport," returned Madden, "if I sell you any more old clothes I 'll have to go around in my pajamas. You 've got all my best things

now. Next thing you know, you 'll be after my beautiful sweater."

"Yes," persisted Mr. Bones with the manner of one whose argument is irresistible, "but I sell 'em again to you cheap, almost as cheap as you sold to me,—just a little profit for a poor man,—and besides, dey just fit you fine."

"Well," exclaimed Madden, somewhat aghast, "of all the nerve, that 's the limit. Sell me my own clothes again! Get out of here, will you? I tell you I have n't got anything but what I 'm standing up in."

"Now, ain't dot a pity?" replied the old-clothes man, his voice and manner indicative of the deepest dejection, "and you vas von of my best customers. I could fit you fine in dem tings I bought last spring ven you vas hard up—and you look just grand." Then, addressing the others, "anything in my line to-day, chents?"

"No," replied Tubby despondently. "Max Keezer's got all mine."

"Nothing doing here, Bonesy, old

sport," said Jean cheerfully; "but Coyne, over at Matthews, says he wants to see you."

"Ach, goot, I go mit him right away vonce."

Here, Tom, who had thus far taken no part in the colloquy, jumped from his perch on the steps, and seizing the itinerant merchant by the shoulders, began to march him solemnly around the big elm, at the same time chanting, to a familiar Gregorian tune, the refrain,

"Any rags, any bones, any bottles to-day?"

The others were not slow to follow his example, and seizing each other by the shoulders they marched, in true lock-step fashion, around and around the elm. Faster and faster moved the procession, until at length Tom, who, in this absorbing occupation of master of ceremonies, seemed suddenly to have shed all his mortal cares, gripped the old man firmly by the hips, and the whole line of rollicking, singing, shouting students rushed their unfortunate victim at a break-neck

clip down the broad walk. As they passed the corner they ran pell mell into two young men who, unfortunately for themselves, were approaching in the opposite direction. One of these, Madden's tutor in astronomy, was sent spinning over against a bench, while Cartright, his companion, offering less resistance, was literally swept from his feet, and landed on the steps of the dormitory, his hat describing a neat trajectory through the air, leaving his scant hair to be fanned by the sweet spring zephyrs, while he gazed at the retreating cyclone with a look of the most utter, abandoned astonishment.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TRIALS OF A HEAD COACH

"I SAY, Thorne," observed Cartright solemnly, after he had recovered his cap, and to some extent his equilibrium, "did—did you meet anybody?"

Thorne smiled feebly,—in a perfunctory way. The hardships, the bitterness, of his early life had served to suppress, if not wholly to eliminate, any quality of humor that might have been native to his character, and, young man though he was, he felt small sympathy for the rollicking, joyous spirit that pervaded the life of the University.

"I think it was Brown and Madden and their gang," he said grimly, with a scowl.

"Well, cheer up, anyhow," cried Cartright, taking a seat by his side on the bench

and slapping him heartily on the back. "Why, man, I have n't seen you so glum for a coon's age,—not since I located you in the—er—er ——"

"Yes—I know—in the attic on Sacramento Street, where I made my own bed and ate my own grub,—whenever I could get hold of any," he added evenly, without a trace of emotion. "But, Cartright, things are so different now. You don't know what these few weeks have meant to me, since I have been able to live like a human being, and not like a starving animal. Why—I feel like a bird set free from its cage. For the first time since coming to Harvard I have been able to enter life on equal terms with the other fellows. I seem to breathe a new air. That 's why, Cartright," he went on earnestly, "I have so often implored you to tell me the name of the man who has helped me. I feel so—so rotten not to be able to thank him, and to express my determination to repay him. Just think —he must regard me as a mere object of charity—a pauper——"

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"Now, that 'll do, Thorne," interrupted the other with some heat. "The chap that 's coughing up for you is n't that kind of a man. He 's no mucker, and thinks that he 's only doing his duty. Moreover, did n't we agree to let this subject rest? When you are in a position to repay the loan, then I will give you the man's name, but not before."

"Oh, yes, I know," returned Thorne, "but I can't help puzzling my brain over it. Honestly, old man, I 'm like a child about the thing. The wonder of it comes between me and my work sometimes, and I find myself dreaming. There is only one thing that contents me, and that is the knowledge that this mysterious Unknown can't be any of the rich set here at college, for of all the ungodly, purse-proud snobs, that crowd that just left here, headed by Madden and Brown, are the worst."

An odd smile flickered about Cartright's thin lips, and his eyes sparkled through his spectacles with an unaccustomed gleam of merriment.

"Oh, I don't know," he said at length, and with a marked embarrassment in his manner. "They—they seem to be rather decent fellows."

"Decent!" retorted Thorne indignantly. "You 've never tutored up in that room! It makes my blood fairly boil to think of the way they treated me! Why, until you men got around me and persuaded me to go in for rowing, they did n't seem to recognize the fact that I was a man like themselves. I was a sort of automaton to them—a mere machine without human feelings. They used to call me 'the grind' right to my face. It has been a little better since I 've shown them I can row, but they never let me feel that I 'm one of them."

"But, my dear Thorne ——"

"I know what you 're thinking. I ought to be glad to have the tutoring to do. Well, I am; for every penny made brings me nearer to the payment of my debt and ——"

"And," broke in Cartright smiling,

"brings an additional comfort to your sister, Miss Marian, eh?"

"Oh, well," returned Thorne, his face flushing as if he had been detected in the perpetration of some reprehensible act, "girls, you know—must have nice frocks and—things. And for that very reason I regret every day having gone in for the crew. A poor fellow such as I am has no business with athletics. The time it takes is all wasted."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Cartright impatiently. "Just think what you owe to Harvard. What 's time or expense when we 're up against this proposition of rowing against England's picked crew? Why, don't you know we want every good man that Harvard can turn out? And, by George, your daily exercise with the axe down there in the mountains of Tennessee has given you an enviable bunch of muscle, old man." And, as illustrating his point, Cartright fastened his long, skinny fingers about his companion's biceps.

"Gee whiz—hard as nails! They all

tell me you 're going to make stroke. Just think of it—stroke oar! Oh Lord, oh Lord," he added, running his hand up and down his own meagre arm, " if I had only been blessed with brawn instead of this mighty intellect! I would rather be stroke oar than class orator any day. But here come the fellows—Brown and his crowd. Now don't get cocky, old sport; just spruce up and look pleasant."

Tom and Madden, Tubby and Thurston came singing down the walk, preceded by a small, wiry-looking individual, with a thin, aquiline nose, and deep-set, black, penetrating eyes. He wore a heavy sweater, despite the congenial warmth of the atmosphere, and his whole attitude was one of alertness, combined with an indefinable quality of authority. This important personage was none other than " Bud " Hall, the professional coach, who was very manifestly aware of the immense responsibility that rested upon his rather slender shoulders. On seeing Thorne he stopped short and observed in a tone of the deepest disgust:

"Oh, it 's you, is it? Why in hell was n't you out to-day for practice?"

"Why," replied Thorne, in some confusion, "I—I was too busy this afternoon —studying."

Mr. Hall drew himself up to his full five feet seven inches, folded his arms across his faded sweater, and surveyed the object of his wrath with a fine contempt, while Tom and his companions looked on with absorbed interest.

"Studying! So you was studying, eh? So that 's what you came to college for, is it—to fritter your valuable time away over books and lectures and such damned nonsense. Now you just listen to what I have to say. You 've got to cut out the study habit if you expect to do anything in athletics. What the devil did you come to Harvard for, anyway, with all that bunch of muscle, and a natural trick for rowing? Do you think it 's right or decent to stick in a stuffy room reading a book, when you ought to be out working and doing your duty to the 'Varsity?"

Poor Thorne, despite the apparent ab-

surdity of the coach's invective, realized that, after all, from the true college man's point of view, it was in some measure justified. Taking Cartright's arm he moved slowly down the walk. On reaching the corner, he turned and said, in a tone of apology:

"I 'm very sorry, Mr. Hall. I 'll try not to miss any more afternoons. But really, it was—it was unavoidable to-day."

When they were gone Hall turned to the others, the very picture of disgust.

"He 's—he 's a mucker."

"Oh, I sa-ay," protested Tom.

"Yes, he is," the coach continued impetuously, "a mucker, a first-class mucker. The idea of a man of his build, taking a place in the squad, and then failing to show up for practice because he *had to study!* Of course, gents, understand me,—I know this is no Yale race, but that does n't excuse a man for shirking his duty. We 're up against a stiff proposition, and every son-of-a-gun in that boat owes it to the college to do his damnedest." Then turning abruptly to Tom, he backed

off a few paces, and proceeded to "size him up" as if he had been a statuesque work of art.

"Oh, Kid, Kid," he exclaimed despairingly, "damn you, Kid, why have n't you got a little more weight? If you had, I 'd put you in Thorne's place in less time than you could shake a rabbit by the tail. Even as it is—you 'd make the second-best stroke on the river, because you 've got the nerve and the judgment."

Whereupon Hall stepped over to Tom and began to punch and pinch and poke and prod his anatomy in an appraising sort of way, as if he were a piece of human goods offered for sale.

"Look at that chest and those arms," he cried, turning to the others, "as hard as a crowbar!" Tom, feeling that the critical eyes of his friends were upon him, swelled out his chest to the bursting point, and folded his arms over it with the backs of his hands under his biceps, as is the weakness of athletes when on exhibition.

"Ah, it 's a pity he can't make the eight," almost sobbed the coach, as he con-

tinued his pinching and prodding. "He 's got the proper college spirit. No books for him. No, siree, not on your life. *He* ain't going to spoil his chances by any too much studying. Fresh air—something doing every minute. *He's* getting some good out of his college education. Why didn't you grow a few more inches, Kid?"

Tom hesitated a moment, and then remarked with a fine exhibition of humor,

"Well, I 'd been taller, Mr. Hall, fair sir, if there had n't been so much of me turned over for feet."

As if moved by a common impulse, the others directed their gaze down at Tom's pedal extremities. It must be admitted that they were, as their owner had intimated, rather large. His friends then, following the example set by the coach, and led by the industrious Tubby, began pinching and poking him critically, and with no great degree of tenderness in the arms, chest, stomach, thighs, and other available regions of his anatomy.

"Here, darn it all, fellows," exclaimed

Tom in the midst of this highly interesting process, "what the devil are you doing? I may want to use these ribs again."

But here the poking and the pinching ceased, and there was a sudden smoothing of hair, straightening of ties, and other matters of prinking that, on occasion, obtain among the sterner sex even as they do among their alleged weaker sisters.

"Cheese it, fellows," whispered Thurston, looking down the elm-lined walk that led to the yard where they were assembled, "here come the girls!"

"Come along, Happy," cried Madden in a sudden access of excitement, "let 's head them off." He started down the walk with Thurston, when he was stopped by Tom.

"Say, Clax," cried the latter, "bring the girls here, won't you? I 've simply *got* to see Evelyn. She won't answer any of my letters and ——"

"All right," interrupted Madden, "I 'll trot 'em along. But don't blame me if they give you the cold and stony. Come on, Happy." And the two men fairly

raced down the walk to intercept their (of course) wholly unsuspecting prey.

As they disappeared, Mr. Hall, the coach, turned disconsolately on his heel to follow them at a gait more in keeping with the dignity of his office. Just before turning the corner he faced about and delivered this Parthian shot at the unhappy Tom,—a world of significance in his voice:

"There 's more good athletes spoiled by this damned fussing than there is by studying!"

CHAPTER IX

TUBBY TO THE RESCUE

"I SAY, Kid," observed Tubby, his eyes wide open in childlike amazement, "you don't mean to say you 're going to stay here and face the girls after that show-down in your room on April first—that April fool gag you worked on us, you know," he added with a somewhat ungainly attempt at facetiousness.

For a second Tom's face clouded with vexation—for a second only. Then his cheery good nature reasserted itself and he smiled down on the anxious countenance of his fat friend.

"Sure thing," he replied confidently. "Just keep your eyes on me—same as they are now."

Tubby sank limply on the bench, and

looked, if possible, more hopelessly amazed than before.

"Gee!" he exclaimed, after a pause, during which admiration began to mingle with his first sensation of astonishment, "if I only had your nerve! Why, Kid, just think, a strange young woman in your room, and Evelyn there and her mother ——"

"Oh, you dry up," interrupted Tom brusquely, "that was all right, and you know it was."

"Yes, I know, Tom," persisted the indefatigable Tubby, whose strong point—provided of course that he had any particular strong point saving and excepting his appetite—was perseverance, "but Evelyn will turn you down!"

Tom grinned complacently, and, removing his cap, made a futile attempt to smooth down his curly locks.

"I say, Kid," insisted Tubby, with a friendly anxiety, "she 'll turn you down, and—and that 'll make you look cheap."

"All the better," replied Tom cheerfully. "She 's a woman, isn 't she?

Well, if I look cheap, she won't be able to resist the bargain." Whereupon he laughed gleefully, quite delighted with the exquisite humor of his repartee.

"All right, you may think you 're awfully funny," said Tubby, with dolorous foreboding, " but you just wait and see. She 'll make you look like a two-spot."

" Oh, quit it, Tubby. I guess I know girls better than you, and ——"

" Yes," interjected Tubby dryly, " I guess you do."

Disregarding the sinister significance of this retort, Tom went on.

" Now, look here, Tub,—I want you to do me a favor, that 's a good fellow. I want you to get Thurston out of the way when they come. You know he 'll be hanging on like a leech, and—well, I want to see Evelyn alone. I 've got something awfully important to say to her."

Tubby looked up at him quizzically.

" Yes," he said, " I 've no doubt you have; got to make yourself solid with her, eh? Gee, what a nerve! Tom, honest, I would like to accommodate you, but how

the deuce am I to get Happy out of the way? It would take a good-sized cyclone to blow him off the map when Evelyn is about. Why, you could n't pry him off with a burglar's jimmy. Besides," he added dejectedly, "you know I 'm no good thinking of things; that is—not until it 's too late.

"I 'll tell you what I 'll do to make it an object," said Tom stepping up to him as if seized with a sudden inspiration. "If you can fix things so that I will be left alone with Evelyn for five minutes after they get here, I 'll blow you off to seven consecutive dinners at the Touraine, after the race. You can go as far as you like."

Tubby gazed at his friend wistfully for a moment, and then sadly shook his head.

"No, Tom, it won't do. It would n't be decent to be bribed to do a favor for a friend."

"Bribe nothing!" rejoined Tom. "You can regard those dinners as a slight token of esteem for your display of friendship. Why, it 's perfectly regular.

That 's the way all big business affairs are conducted."

"No, is it though?" said Tubby, visibly weakening and unconsciously smacking his lips. "Honest, Kid, I don't want to sponge, but, after all, the job's worth the money."

"You 'll do it then, Tubby?" inquired Tom eagerly.

"Oh, confound it all, Kid, you know I 'm no diplomat."

"Cheese it," whispered Tom, "here they are! You need n't be diplomatic,—just —just do anything that 's necessary."

Tom and Tubby then retreated to the dormitory steps, as Madden and Edith and Thurston and Evelyn loitered into view around the corner and stopped under the big elm. The girls were togged out in their finest undress uniform, and, all things considered, neither Madden nor Thurston was particularly to blame for the very evident devotion that either betrayed toward his respective convoy. For a few minutes they engaged in a delightfully inane conversation, laughing and

rattling on as is the custom with young men and young women when they are concerned merely with the joy of each other's presence.

Soon, however, Madden turned toward the steps, and remarking the two rather lugubrious figures, seated thereon, exclaimed, with a fine assumption of surprise:

"Why, hello, Kid! You here?"

Tom glanced significantly at the two girls, who appeared to be wholly unaware of his presence, and then drawled out in his characteristic monotone:

"It seems not, my dear fellow."

After a pause, during which the young women continued blissfully ignorant of his existence, he added:

"Good afternoon, er—Miss Ames—Miss Sinclair."

Edith turned around and directed at him a gaze calculated to freeze a salamander, while Evelyn appeared to be more absorbed than ever in the elevating and inspiring conversation of Mr. Happy Thurston.

"Did any one speak?" asked Tom with a desperate resort to jocularity.

No answer being vouchsafed to this appeal, Tubby, who began to feel the full responsibilities of his contract, played his initial card, though, as will appear, it was no trump.

"Eh—eh—how do you do, Miss Ames?"

Evelyn turned upon him with a beaming countenance:

"Oh, how are you, Mr. Anderson," she remarked effusively; "it 's been such a long time since I saw you!"

"Sure thing," replied the somewhat discomfited Tubby, "not since—er—the day before yesterday. I say, Thurston," he went on, with manifest irrelevance, "those fish eggs we were watching down at the lab. have all hatched out. The fish has—er—er—been sitting on them for a month. Let 's you and me go down and see 'em."

The party under the tree turned, with one accord, and stared at Tubby as if he had been an exhibit at a dime museum.

Thurston renewed his intimate, animated conversation.

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As for Tom, he hugged his knees in an agony of exasperation, ending by shaking his fist covertly at his unfortunate accomplice.

"Ye—es," said Tom after the astonishment had in some degree subsided, "Tubby is *so* devoted to biology, you know."

"*Bi*-ology!" remarked Thurston, with exquisite sarcasm. "It is n't biology, it 's *fry*-ology. Tubby likes to watch the eggs hatch and think how many millions of good edible fish they will make some day. Not for me this afternoon, Tubby. *I 've* got something far more important on hand just now!"

"Talking about fish, I guess you 've been hooked all right," retorted Tubby.

Thurston, however, paid him no attention, but turned to his companion, and, with lowered head, renewed his intimate, animated conversation.

Tubby subsided on the steps and, burying his head in his hands, abandoned himself to the awful effort of devising some other scheme that would serve to

detach the adhesive Happy from his fair companion.

In the meantime, Tom was engaged in an expressive, if violent, pantomime with Madden, the plain import of which was that his chum should at least partly clear the atmosphere by removing Edith from the sphere of action. Prompted by this very palpable hint, Madden looked at Edith inquiringly, as much as to say, "Shall we?" And Edith with ready feminine finesse nodded an unmistakable "Yes."

"Evie," she said, "we 'll meet you at Vespers, if you don't mind. Mr. Madden wants to show me—er—the glass flowers in the museum."

Evelyn watched their retreating forms, and then turned to Thurston, smiling:

"They evidently don't want us," she said.

"No more than we want them," returned Thurston with the imbecile grin of a devoted admirer.

"I 've got to wait here," continued Evelyn. "I—I—want to see Wilton. He said he'd be back about five."

The two seated themselves on the bench and continued their absorbed conversation. Evelyn appeared to be immensely interested and amused by the strenuous efforts of her companion, and from time to time broke into hearty, uncontrollable peals of laughter, so hearty and uncontrollable, in fact, as to suggest a slight suspicion of insincerity.

Tom, however, seemed not to notice this. For the first time since his sweetheart had arrived on the scene, his manner began to betray a certain lack of its accustomed confidence, and he ultimately developed a deep and settled gloom. For several minutes he remained seated on the steps of the dormitory, while he gazed despondently down upon the happy couple before him. Then, unable to bear the tantalizing sight longer, he gave Tubby, who sat close by his side, a vigorous nudge, and whispered:

"Get busy, will you?"

Tubby straightened himself up, hemmed and hawed for a few seconds, in a "montes parturiunt" fashion, and then,

after a desperate pause, sang out miserably:

"Say, Thursty—let 's you and me go—go look for violets!"

Tom buried his head deep in his hands and groaned aloud, while Thurston detached himself from his consort long enough to turn around and inquire, with blighting scorn:

"What 's the matter with you? Got 'em again?"

But here an extraordinary phenomenon occurred. Tubby suddenly rose from his seat, the bright light of inspiration shining in his eyes, and, after a few whispered words to Tom, darted enthusiastically into the dormitory. A broad grin replaced the gloom in Tom's countenance, and there was cheer and hope in his voice as he once more addressed the couple on the bench.

"I suppose I 'm *de trop,*" he remarked dryly, with the accent on the final "p."

The others paid him not the slightest attention. In fact Evelyn fairly exploded with laughter at the perpetration

of some exquisite *bon mot* of her friend. At this moment Billy, the postman, swung around the corner, to deliver the evening mail at the dormitory.

"Hello, Billy," exclaimed Tom, "did you leave a letter for me?"

"No, sir, Mr. Brown, not to-night, sir."

"That's too bad," replied Tom with significant distinctness. "I've written four times this week to one girl and she has n't answered yet. Now, Billy, what do you think of that?"

Billy shook his head sadly, evidently melted with sympathy.

"It looks bad, Mr. Brown," he said, as he passed through the door. "Night, sir."

"I sa—ay, Happy," cried Tom, once more coming to the attack, "I suppose I'm in the way—*de trop,* don't you know?"

Again Thurston condescended to make reply. Glancing at Tom over his shoulder, he said reassuringly:

"Oh, not at all, old man. Keep your seat and make yourself perfectly at home."

"Did the lady speak?" inquired Tom

anxiously, "for I fear I must be going."

"Oh," replied Thurston rising and lifting his cap in an elaborate salute, "don't let us keep you."

At this moment there was a sound of revelry within the dormitory,—a succession of shrieks and demoniacal howls, and in an instant Tubby appeared in the doorway, his eyes fairly popping with excitement and joy, followed by a crowd of students. When they caught sight of Thurston chatting amiably with his fair companion, they set up an exhilarating war-whoop, and rushing forward pell-mell down the steps, without any perceptible pause in their activity, swept that unfortunate young man from his feet in the twinkling of an eye, and carried him—struggling, fighting, and vigorously protesting—on their shoulders down the walk with a wild shout of triumph that soon developed into a glad pæan of victory.

Tubby, however, stopped long enough to observe to Tom in a wholly pardonable tone of exultation:

"I said I was n't a diplomat, Kid.

I just used force, you know—worked up a cyclone. Seven dinners at the Touraine! Gee!"

And then he lumbered lightly off after his organized gang of banditti.

CHAPTER X

ON PROBATION

AS the tumult and the shouting died away in the foliated distance of the yard, Tom slowly approached his sweetheart, cap in hand, his face lighted up with its accustomed grin of good fellowship, his eyes fairly dancing with the gleam of anticipated joy. As for Evelyn, she turned her back abruptly and retreated to the tree, where she stood with a highly suspicious shaking of the shoulders. Tom stood still for a moment and then edged still nearer.

"I told Tubby," he said, in a polite tone of explanation, "that he need n't mind being diplomatic. And—and I don't really think he was, do you, dear?"

Evelyn drew herself together stiffly, and replied freezingly:

"I told Tubby that he needn't mind being diplomatic."

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"Don't you dare to call me dear, sir!"

"Oh," said Tom, apparently disconcerted, "beg pardon—I—I really thought you *were* dear, don't you know. No offence, no offence."

For reply Evelyn flounced away from him and retreated to the other side of the tree. Tom followed docilely.

"Happy,—Thurston,—Mr. Thurston, you know, did n't even stop to say good-bye," he ventured, offering the olive branch of peace and forgiveness. Evelyn tapped the ground impatiently with her foot, but it was evident that she was thawing rapidly under the melting influence of Tom's congenial warmth.

"It was very impolite of him," continued Tom hopefully.

Evelyn, unable to hold in longer, burst into a peal of laughter.

"Oh,—you are too—too absurd. But it *was* funny. Mr. Thurston looked so —surprised." Whereupon she put her handkerchief to her face and giggled tumultuously.

"*I* would never have left you so rudely,"

went on Tom, gradually working around to Evelyn's side of the tree.

"Tom Brown," she exclaimed, turning suddenly upon him, "I never saw such assurance. You need n't think I 'm laughing because I 'm pleased with you, for I 'm not." In spite of this assertion, however, the bright film of tears in her eyes seemed to indicate that her displeasure was not wholly of an incurable character.

"Still," persisted Tom, resting one hand against the trunk of the tree, "you don't feel *quite* so angry as you did, now do you?"

"Tom—Mr. Brown, I mean, I—I just *hate* you!"

For some mysterious reason, Tom did not seem to be in the least discomfited by this discouraging statement. Instead, he drew still nearer—so near that his hand, in a wholly accidental fashion, closed upon hers as it rested on the trunk of the tree.

"No—you don't hate me, Evie. You love me."

Evelyn snatched her hand from his.

"How dare you, sir!" she exclaimed with a very dramatic indignation, as she started toward the walk.

Tom jumped nimbly in front of her and barred the way.

"Well, Evelyn," he said composedly, "it 's just this way. I 've reasoned the whole thing out after a good deal of—of study. You know this thing is like a problem in mathematics, and I 'm very fond of mathematics. You see, there 's Miss Sinclair—Edith—who was in the room that day. She was n't so *awfully* angry. At least she speaks to me, and even your mother promised to forget the incident after I had explained to her, and she went so far as to say that, if I was a very good little boy, I might come to see you again. But," and here he adopted the tone of one whose logic is irresistible, "but you—you won't forgive me. Now what does that prove? Why, simply that the matter must have gone deeper with you than with the others. And so," he wound up triumphantly, "I know you do care—a whole lot!"

For a moment Evelyn appeared stunned by the overwhelming conclusiveness of Tom's argument, but, as it was entirely too early to abandon her attitude of hauteur, she resorted to a subtle, if somewhat common, feminine device.

"Well," she said eventually, "mother may do as she likes, but—but I don't consider the explanation you gave her at all satisfactory."

"No?" replied Tom in apparent dejection. "Why, I—I thought it was a bully explanation. It took me a long time to fix it up, you know. No—I don't mean that," he added in some alarm. "What I told your mother was the truth, but if you are not satisfied with it, I can give you an entirely different explanation —only you must let me have a little time."

Evelyn looked up at him, half amused, half vexed, struggling between her girlish inclination to take the whole thing as she knew it to be,—a mere accident in which her beloved Tom had been unfortunately involved,—and her feminine sense of wounded pride.

"Oh, Tom," she said with a pretty little gesture of impatience, "how can you be so provoking? Why don't you be frank with me?"

Perceiving an opening for another of his dainty *bon mots,* Tom replied airly:

"How can I be Frank with you, when I am Tom with everybody else?"

This was too much even for Evelyn. Once more she started off haughtily down the walk, but once more Tom interposed his considerable form in her path and barred her progress.

"Now look here, Evie," he said earnestly, with arms outstretched on either side as if Evelyn were a stray hen that he was shooing back to her proper habitat, "why don't you trust me? I can't go into all the details about how that girl, Miss Thorne, happened to be in my room without implicating some one else—not Madden, of course. There 's nothing—er—crooked. Everything 's all right, and you must believe me, dear. All I can say is that there was no disloyalty to you in her being there. You believe that, don't

you?" he inquired eagerly, looking at her beseechingly with his ingenuous blue eyes. "Why, gee whiz, Evie—you know I 'm no gay Lothario, no Don Quixote —or was he the chap that—now, come, there 's a good girl," he added, taking her gently by the hand, "let 's sit down. It 's lots more comfortable than standing."

Evelyn, very manifestly weakening under Tom's persistent attacks, seated herself gingerly at the end of the bench, as far removed as possible from her lover. The latter, however, promptly slid up toward her until he was within comfortable range.

"Now, hang it all, Evie," he said, "this spirit of suspicion is a bad thing. If a wife can't trust her husband ——"

"Tom!" she cried, turning on him indignantly, "How dare you talk so? You 're *not* my husband."

"Why," drawled Tom after a moment apparently devoted to profound deliberation, "that 's so—you 're right, Evie. I —I was anticipating. But," he went on

cheerfully, "you know I 'm going to be your husband all right."

Upon saying which he reached deliberately over and, removing a bunch of violets from her waist, attempted to fasten them in the lapel of his coat with a delightful air of unconcern. Evelyn however, before the process was half completed, snatched them away from him.

"Why, Tom," she cried indignantly— "how dare you!"

"As I was saying," continued Tom wholly unperturbed, though he cast a rueful glance at the somewhat mangled violets, "as I was saying, the only way to be happy is to be trustful. When you come down to cases—er—I mean, when you come down to the truth, there 's no use asking an honorable, upright man about anything he does n't want you to know. He 'll be sure to tell you li—fibs; so you might just as well be serene and hope for the best and—and love the brute in spite of all his faults. And then—why, you 'll be surprised how happy we 'll be."

This eloquent appeal had its desired ef-

fect. Evelyn once more placed her handkerchief to her face to hide her smiling. Tom, perceiving the advantage he had gained, began to press it home. Removing a ring from his waistcoat pocket, he continued:

"I say, Evie, just let me put this ring on again—there 's a nice girl. You will, won't you, dear?"

Evelyn remained silent.

"You don't know how broken up I was when you sent it back," went on Tom with a certain clumsy earnestness. "I 'm not much on talk—like Happy for instance—but you know, Evelyn, there 's never been anybody but you for me since I first saw you. It seems to run in our family. There 's the governor; he could n't see any other proposition than my mother. She was 'it' ever since he was a boy and—oh, hang it, Evie! Let me put the ring on."

"No! No!" cried Evelyn, drawing away from him again. "It was foolish anyway—your pledging yourself before your college days were over, before you 'd really known any other girls."

"Oh, confound it all, Evie," exclaimed Tom impatiently, "you know, there *are n't* any other girls!"

And there is where Tom made his ten-strike. You may argue with a girl, you may plead with her, you may convince her beyond all possibility of a doubt without in the least affecting her conduct. But once let her believe that she is the only one, then, well, it will be different. And thus it was that Evelyn, casting a shy, relenting glance on the eager countenance of her sweetheart, gently disengaged the violets from her waist.

"Well, Tom," she said shyly, while she slipped the bouquet into his hand, "you may—have these. I 'm sorry I took them from you so rudely just now. But I won't take the ring—no—not yet. Perhaps, if,—well, perhaps, you may come to see me ——"

In the exuberance of his joy, Tom seized her about the waist and attempted to kiss her.

"No, Tom, stop!" she cried, putting him away firmly. "Remember, sir, I

have n't altogether forgiven you yet. I may forgive you some day,—but not yet. And you 're not to try to kiss me—or—anything like that, for a long, long time. You 're only on probation!"

CHAPTER XI

VICTOR COLTON

IF you should ask the average Harvard man just when Victor Colton had graduated with his degree of B.A., said Harvard man would have, in all probability, been "stumped" for a reply. Colton was regarded as an institution in himself. It was rumored that he was pursuing a post-graduate course, and, during the passage of the years, he had taken on a sort of double aspect—half student, half alumnus, and yet neither one nor the other. A similar mystery shrouded the exact character of his graduate studies. No one ever seemed to have seen or heard of him in a lecture-room or laboratory. He was wholly unknown at the library and, as for attendance at chapel, such a thing would have been regarded in the

nature of a phenomenon. Some one had facetiously observed that, though Colton was pursuing a post-graduate course, he never seemed quite able to catch up with it. And yet he was commendably persistent, for, though students came to the University and graduated with machine-like regularity, Colton stayed on forever.

He was what the society columns would term a " well-groomed " man; always neat in appearance, clean-shaven, and quite immaculate as to such rather adventitious aids to personal adornment as patent leather shoes, gloves, hats " in season," and walking-stick. No one ever remembered to have seen him in " sneakers," a sweater, flannel trousers, or a cap. Indeed, as far as accoutrement went, he seemed, in contrast with the great body of students, like some rare exotic,—a wholly paradoxical garden plant in that gay, luxuriant growth of wild flowers.

The uncertainty that surrounded his status as a student also attached to his personality. For, though obviously older than the average college man, it would be

difficult to say just how old he was. He might have been twenty-five,—he might have been thirty; no one would have been surprised to learn that either was the case.

The one definite thing known about Colton was his devoted attachment to Freshmen, especially to Freshmen who received liberal allowances from their not over-judicious parents. He fastened himself upon them with an ardor that was in direct ratio to the amount of spare change at their disposal, and, as Tom had intimated in his warning to Ames, was a constant and faithful tutor in that branch of the curriculum not scheduled in the University catalogue—the great American science of poker. That his pupils paid liberally for the instruction they received at his hands was, perhaps, no more than just, considering the time and labor he devoted to their education. It was generally rumored that this was, indeed, his "post-graduate course," that he earned a very respectable income at this engaging, if somewhat irregular, branch of research. If that were so, however, no one had ever

made direct complaint of him. His victims—if they were such—were characteristically reticent as to their losses, and, observing the unwritten code in such matters, never made the slightest " squeal."

Colton's " friendships " were not wholly confined to Freshmen. He numbered also among his associates certain upper classmen who, lacking either training or character, discovered a certain congeniality in the stronger, more virile personality of this man who well knew how, by flattery and cajolery, to clothe them with a sort of vicarious importance. This latter class included Wilton Ames. Dissipated and nervous wreck that he was, he found in Colton what he regarded as a sympathetic, congenial companion, a man who, instead of " lecturing " him and finding fault with his weaknesses, metaphorically patted him on the back, and, for purposes of revenue only, made him believe that he was a very good fellow who was suffering from lack of appreciation and sympathy. In fact, as between Colton and Ames, it was a typical case of the

spider and the fly,—the fly being invariably willing, if not eager, to walk into the parlor.

The day when Tom had once more established diplomatic relations with Evelyn found Ames in Colton's rooms over at Dunster. No one would have suspected, from a cursory view of the apartment, that Colton was not a devoted student. In one corner was a grand piano, on the rack of which was a bound volume of Beethoven's sonatas. The walls were lined with book shelves, which were filled with books, all of a respectable literary character. In the centre of the room was a large, square-top reading desk, littered with books and papers. The floor was covered with a rich, heavy rug, while, despite the warmth of the atmosphere, a cheery wood fire burned on the andirons in the fireplace.

It would, perhaps, be ungracious to explain that all these elaborate fittings were a part of Colton's stock in trade; that they were cunningly designed to lend him the character of that which he was not—a man

of literary and studious habits; that he did n't know a Beethoven sonata from Bach's Mass in B Minor; that the books were seldom if ever removed from their places on the shelves; that the desk could, in the twinkling of an eye, be converted into a very serviceable poker table. Whatever the purpose for which the room was so elaborately fitted up, it must be allowed that the fittings were in excellent taste.

Colton was lounging easily in an armchair smoking a cigar, while Ames sat rather dejectedly at the desk, toying nervously with an ivory paper-cutter. For a long time they had remained thus in silence, Colton occasionally eyeing his companion with a very palpable contempt. At length, flinging the remnant of his cigar into the fireplace, he spoke.

"Look here, Ames,—what a grouch you have on! What 's the matter, old man?"

Ames made no reply other than tapping the desk nervously with the paper-cutter.

"Ever since you 've been on the water wagon," continued Colton, a shade of

genuine vexation clouding his face, "you have n't been fit company for man or beast. What the deuce has got into you? You 've got no right to treat me so, when you know I 'm one of your best friends. Come on over to town to-night, and let 's have a little try at Billy Moran's. No big game, you know, just a little quiet séance."

"No, I won't," replied Ames abruptly. And then, after a moment of nervous silence, he went on:

"Why can't you let me alone, Colton, when I am trying to be decent?"

"Let you alone!" returned the other with considerable heat. "If that 's what you want, I 'll let you alone, all right. By Jove,—why, you talk as though we were a sort of Mephisto and Faust proposition. You 're a nice, sweet, innocent little Faust, are n't you?"

Ames looked up at him sharply, a sudden dread sweeping over his pale countenance.

"What—what do you mean, Colton?"

"Well," continued the other, as if he

had not heard, "you can't say I 've had anything to do with the mess you 've got into with your Marguerite, anyhow." And then rising, as if about to leave, he added:

"By-by, until you are in a better humor."

"What do you mean?" asked Ames hoarsely.

"Why—I 'm going—that 's all."

"No—no," the other insisted. "What do you mean by what you said just now about—about the girl?"

"Oh, now, look here, Ames," replied the older man as he stopped suddenly at the threshold and walked slowly back toward the table where his companion sat huddled like some stricken creature, "don't you imagine for an instant that I 'm not wise to all that about the girl. Why," he said with a sinister smile of contempt as he surveyed the poor, weak figure before him, "you tell everything you know when you 're in a sympathetic mood—when you don't realize what you 're saying, don't you know? Oh, yes, I know all about

it," he went on in a louder tone as Ames made a feeble gesture of protest. "You 've given yourself dead away, old man. You might just as well have put it all down in an affidavit. You 've poured your troubles into my sympathizing ear, time and time again. Lord—how you 've bored me about that girl, about how you intended to elope with her. Poor Miss Thorne," he added, looking down at Ames with the stealthy gaze of an animal stealing upon its prey. "Poor, innocent girl!"

Ames sprawled his arms on the desk and buried his face in his hands, trembling convulsively in the effort to conceal his emotion.

"Poor innocent girl," repeated Colton distinctly, in a tone as hard as flint. "How could you, damn it all, Ames?—But here—see here, old fellow," he said, assuming a friendly manner, "don't feel so broken up about it. It 's a bad business,—but then I 've always been a good chum of yours, so cheer up. Come, cheer up, do you hear?" he said, shaking Ames

roughly by the shoulder. "It 'll all come out right in the end. Remember, as I said, I 'm a good friend of yours, and we sha'n't let a little thing like this spoil it all. Come along over to town and let 's make a night of it. Come on, will you?"

For a few moments there was a silence broken only by the crackling of the burning logs in the fireplace. Then Ames, pulling himself together with an effort, replied in a voice choking with agitation:

"Oh, let me alone, Colton! You know I can't go if I would. I—I have n't any money."

"As if that made any difference between boon companions," replied Colton with an attempt to adopt an air of good fellowship, though his voice was distinctly patronizing. "Now, understand me, old man, I want to help you. I 'm not going to quarrel with you in spite of your surly conduct. I like you, Ames; there 's something about you that appeals to me, and I want to help you out of this hole you 're in. Why, confound it, man, I asked you over especially to-day to put

you in the way of making a nice little sum of money."

Ames looked up at him, pale, haggard, his eyes bloodshot. Hardened though he was, Colton's face flushed before his friend's searching, anxious, half-suspecting gaze.

"What do you want me to do?" asked Ames in a tone that was scarcely audible.

"Oh, hang it all, old fellow, don't put on so much agony," replied the other with a gruff attempt to appear at ease. "You need money, don't you? A few hundred would come in very handy, eh? Well, I repeat, I can put you in the way of picking up a comfortable little purse just for the trouble of—er—of stooping for it."

"*Stooping* for it?" repeated Ames blankly. "What do you mean by stooping for it?"

"Well—er,—," replied Colton, confused and embarrassed in spite of himself, "I suppose you 'd call it stooping. It 's no uncommon thing though. You see, the odds on the race are two to one on the 'Varsity against the Englishmen."

"I know that; but I have n't any money to bet."

"Ah, I am perfectly aware of that," replied Colton, with an evil leer, "but I have, and I 'm placing every penny I can lay my hands on on the English crew, because they are going to win—and," here he leaned over and almost whispered into Ames's ear, "and it is *you* who will be the cause of their winning!"

Ames drew back, his hands working nervously, his manner a mingling of dread and indignation.

"I don't understand you!" he said at length. "I don't know what you 're talking about!"

"Oh, you don't?" replied Colton, rapidly regaining his self-assurance as he noticed his friend's agitation. "Well, I 'll explain. It 's very simple. This fellow Thorne—your friend Madden's tutor and,—ahem—the brother of the young lady whom you ——"

"For God's sake, Colton, cut it out. What are you driving at?"

"Well, this chap Thorne is the key-

stone of the crew. He is the whole show, and he alone is responsible for the great work that the crew is doing. Why, he fairly lifts that boat over the short course between the Longwood Bridge and the Union Boat Club. It is his work that has enabled the crew to beat all records over that course in practice. It is his work that is sending the odds up in favor of the 'Varsity. They have n't a substitute in his class."

"Well," cried Ames impatiently as the other stopped. "What do you mean? Where do I come in?"

"Oh—so you 're not 'on' yet? Well, I 'll be a little more particular. What I mean is, that Thorne is n't going to row."

"What! Thorne not row?" repeated Ames in genuine amazement.

"That 's exactly what I mean. Thorne is n't going to row. On the morning of the 30th, just before the race, his sister, Miss Marian, is going to leave Cambridge suddenly. See?"

"Look here, Colton," cried Ames, springing from his seat impetuously,

"what in hell are you proposing to me? Do you expect me to betray my own college, my own friends? Damn it all, Colton, I may be no account, weak and good for nothing, but if I 'm capable of such treachery—such rottenness—as you seem to think, why, then I want to lie down and die right now! I don't want to go on living."

"Oh, is that so?" returned the other with a sneer, "you don't want to go on living, eh? What a nice little Sunday-school scholar you are, to be sure. How noble, how consistent! You would n't betray your college, but you would run away with ——"

"Stop!" shouted Ames desperately, "I tell you, man, stop!"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Colton, with mock surprise, "you don't really mean to say that you 're sensitive on that subject? Now, look here, old man," he continued, assuming his confidential, sympathetic tone, "you 're no worse than lots of other fellows; you 've merely been—well, injudicious. And what is it I ask of you? Of

course you intend to marry the girl, and all I want is that you have her leave Cambridge a little sooner than she otherwise would—to be precise, on the morning of the 30th. I 'll see to it that Thorne learns of her departure before the race, and you may depend upon it, he 'll rush off to hunt her up. He 's mighty fond of her, I believe—eh?" he added significantly. "And if the Englishmen win, as they must, with Harvard deprived of her stroke oar, why—I owe you $500. Shall I put that down as a bet?" he asked, taking a note-book from his waistcoat pocket.

With an oath Ames crashed his fist down on the desk.

"No!" he cried, "never! It 's—it 's unspeakable, it 's unworthy of a Harvard man! And, Colton, I 'm done with you from this moment," he added, moving toward the door, "done with you, I say!"

"Ah, but one minute," returned Colton gently, stepping quickly between him and the door, "you may be done with me, but I don't think so. At any rate, I 'm not done with you. Now listen, and be rea-

sonable. This Thorne, I understand, is a semi-savage from the mountains of Tennessee. Fellows like that don't handle men of your sort with gloves. In fact, they become quite violent at times. What do you suppose he would do to you if I should tell him what I know? What would he do to his sister? What would your own sister think, and your mother ——"

"Oh, for God's sake," said Ames, sinking back into his seat, quite broken, and resorting to his old, habitual whine, "don't —don't; for heaven's sake, man, don't!"

Colton stood contemplating the abject creature with a feeling almost of pity.

"There," he said, "now you're showing your good sense. What is the loss of a boat race compared with the loss of—of everything else? You will do as I tell you, like a good fellow,—and everything will work out all right in the end,—won't you, old man?"

And for answer, Ames, crushed, defeated, humiliated, once more bowed his head in his hands, and sobbed like a child.

CHAPTER XII

THE STORY OF SKIMPOLE MCLEA

"NOW, look here, fellows, hang it all," exclaimed Thurston as, some half hour after he had been so unceremoniously swept from the presence of his beloved one, he was again tumultuously deposited on the ground under the elm tree—"you may think this is very funny, but, confound it all, there 's a limit to all things."

"Oh, gee," wheezed Tubby as he lay sprawling and breathless on the grass—"you were the limit, at that."

"No, honest," protested Thurston indignantly, "if you consider this a joke——"

"We do, we do," exclaimed Van Rensselaer gleefully, "it was a bully joke. I wonder you don't appreciate it, old man."

"Well, I don't see anything funny in it," continued Thurston angrily; "making me look like a two-spot right before Miss Ames. It was a low down trick. If Tom can't get next any other way than by mobbing a chap, then he ought to quit and leave the field for those who play fair."

"Well, at least," observed Jean seriously, "we gave you a nice half hour's spin in his benzine buggy. Just think of that. You ought to go and thank him, first chance you get."

"All right," replied Thurston, who was still very obviously suffering from a sense of wounded dignity—what the novel writers would term "amour propre"—"I 'll get even with you yet." And as he moved off down the walk he stopped long enough to deliver this awful, parting shot:

"You 're all a bunch of—of damned Indians!"

So far, however, from being seriously disturbed by this dire anathema, Jean de Reszke was distinctly cheerful, and at once, in his really beautiful tenor voice,

started a song, the others, seated on the bench, on the steps, on the grass under the trees, joining in a vociferous chorus:

If I were a duck
And you were a duck,
    And we were all ducks together,
We 'd paddle in a boat in a rubber overcoat,
    In rainy or other weather.
(Chorus:) Quack! Quack! Quackety—quack quack,
    Ftz! Boom! How 's your mamma now?

If I were a cat
And you were a cat,
    And we were all cats together,
We 'd stroll on the fence, where the shubbery is dense,
    In rainy or other weather.
(Chorus:) Meow, meow, wow-wow-wow,
    Ftz! Boom! How 's your mamma now?

If I were a girl
And you were a girl,
    And we were all girls together.
We 'd spoon 'neath the moon, in the merry month of June,
    In rainy or other weather.
(Chorus:) *——, ——, ——, ——, ——.
    Ftz! Boom! How 's your mamma now?

*These dashes represent the sound made by audible osculation. The authors were unable to devise any typographical equivalent.

"Say, fellows," exclaimed Jean when this highly classical selection had been punctiliously brought to a close, "it's getting damp out here. Come on up in my room and I'll tell you the queerest story about my grind."

The others followed Jean into the dormitory, and went up to his room on the second floor, the windows of which overlooked the yard they had just left. Jean perched himself comfortably on the window-seat, while the men strewed themselves about the place, some in chairs, some on the couch, others on rugs, the sole object being to obtain a comfortable position with the expenditure of the least possible energy.

"I suppose you fellows knew I had a grind, did n't you?" began Jean looking around upon his guests.

"Well, I don't know about that, Jean," replied Tubby, cheerfully. "We knew you *ought* to have one, at any rate."

"Oh, so little Bright Eyes has come to, has he," said Jean sarcastically, with a

vain endeavor to squelch the irrepressible Tubby with a scowl.

"Sure thing," responded Tubby promptly.

"Well," continued Jean, "I have got a grind, and he's the queerest chap you ever saw. He is tall and skinny—fearfully skinny—you can almost see through him—and his name is Skimpole McLea. Of course," he added parenthetically, partly by way of apology and partly by way of explanation, "we just had to call him 'Skimpy.' You know, the name fits him to a T.

"He is a very modest sort of chap, seemed to be awfully poor, and needed the money, and he is a crackajack tutor, too. I had him for Geology 2, for there are a few things that I sort of failed to assimilate pertaining to the paleozoic age."

There was a grunt of sympathy from Jean's audience.

"Things ran along slick as mud until one day while I was here alone somebody knocked at the door, and a real pretty girl came into the room."

"Look here, Jean," broke in his chum Bernard incredulously, "is this another Tom Brown game? There seems to be an epidemic of fair queens butting into the retired apartments of bashful college students."

"Oh, dry up, Berny!" cried Tubby impatiently. "Remember, Jean is a musical artist, and enjoys certain immunities. Go ahead with your spiel, Jean."

"'This is Mr. Bernard's and Mr. Pierce's room, is n't it?' she asked, very sweet and lovely, 'and you are Mr. Pierce —Jean de Reszke! You see, I know you from the description my brother gave us of you.'

"She had me groggy at the start," said Jean, "but I asked her to sit down, not exactly knowing what she had to say. You see, I thought of course it was a 'touch' of some kind, but—well, she was deucedly pretty, so, as I said, I asked her to sit down."

"Yes, you said that," observed the indefatigable Tubby. "Hurry on to the part where I come in. I was in it, boys,"

he explained, turning to the group on the floor.

"'I was looking for my brother—Mr. Bernard's and your chum, you know,' she said," continued Jean. "Of course I did n't know who on earth she meant, but I looked wise, and she went on.

"'My mother and I came up to visit him. We went to his room, but as he was n't there, I thought of course he must be here, with his dearest friends.'

"I was up against it for fair then," said Jean; "could n't imagine who the devil the brother was, for I thought I knew all the sisters in our crowd. Anyhow, she took a seat, real home-like and cosey, and began to size me up as if I had been an exhibit in the museum.

"'I should have known you anywhere from my brother's description,' she said. 'I can see at once why the fellows call you "Lord a'mighty Pierce" sometimes, though brother says you are not nearly so snobbish as you look.'"

There was another appreciative gurgle from those on the floor.

"I thanked her kindly," said Jean, "and begged her to proceed.

"'He says you have been awfully kind to him,' she said, 'and that since you got him so much tutoring to do he has been able to afford better lodgings and has picked up wonderfully in health.'

"Well, sir," explained Jean, "she had me going then sure. I racked my brains but could n't for the life of me think of any of our crowd who was making a specialty of tutoring. It seemed to me that the boot was on the other leg. However, she did n't appear to notice, but went right on, kind of sizing up the room and then looking over at me in a way that made me feel kind of—of queer."

"Say, cut that all out, will you Jean," interrupted Tubby. "Get a move on you and arrive at the part where I come in."

"'Mother thought it was going to make brother miserable,'" Jean continued, paying Tubby no heed, "'coaching a lot of rich students. She wrote him not to do it if it made him unhappy; and then

suddenly after that his letters grew bright and cheerful, and he told us how fond you had all grown of him, and how you had taken him up. He is devoted to Mr. Bernard and the others, but I think he likes you best of all.' "

Tubby looked up at the speaker quizzically.

" Sure," he said with delicate irony, " why not? Jean de Reszke, member of the glee club, entertainer of strange but beautiful young ladies, and all round Good Samaritan."

" Well," replied Jean, in some confusion, " I 'll admit I felt sort of queer— asked her what the deuce I had ever done to make this unknown chum so fond of me, and then, sir, she got up and reeled off a speech just like the leading lady in a repertoire company.

" ' Yes, he 's just devoted to you! ' she says, very dramatic. ' Now, don't you pretend that you have forgotten that time when you stood up before all the other fellows and said: " Men, here is a chap who is poor but brilliant. He has been

unnoticed, insulted, sorrowful, and alone. After this, he is our friend, one of us!" Ah, I learned that speech by heart,' she says. 'It was so noble of you. Brother told us all about it in his letters.'"

"Say, Jean," inquired Tubby with some curiosity, "did you ever make a spiel like that?"

"Not when I've been sober, and you fellows know that booze isn't my long suit."

"'We used to cry, my mother and I,' she went on, 'when brother first came to Harvard. His letters were so sad. You see, the McLeas are an old family with generations of Scotch pride back of them, so I suppose that is what made him suffer so at first.'

"Well, sir," said Jean solemnly, "you could have knocked me over with a feather duster. McLea! Skimpole McLea! Skimpy McLea! Why—you see, this unknown chum of ours was no other than my grind!"

"Gee whiz, Jean," exclaimed Bernard sitting up in his place on the rug, "this

is real melodrama—great! Go on. What did the fair young queen spring on you next?"

"Jean," interposed Tubby mournfully, "will you *please* skip to the part where I make my entrance, left upper center?"

"Well," continued Jean, whose manner as he went on with his narrative became increasingly serious, "she got up, crossed the room, and stood in front of the fireplace, sort of admiring things generally.

"'O dear!' she said, 'I never thought I should get to see this room! You see, it was like this. We have an uncle—quite rich, but very canny. How it happened, I cannot say, but last week something put it into his head to send us a little money. Mother was for giving it to Skimpole, but I thought, as long as he was doing so well, it would be better to come on and visit him instead. We had n't seen the dear boy for nearly a year, so mother adopted my advice, and here we are!'

"Just as she said that," continued

Jean, "there was a devil of a clatter out in the hallway, and I knew the gang was coming in. I was rattled all right, but determined to put on a bold front and let that girl down as easy as possible."

"Bully for you!" exclaimed Tubby ecstatically, "always let the ladies down easy. But please hurry to where I ——"

"Well," went on Jean, whose manner had by this time become strangely solemn, "when the door opened, in pranced Tom Brown, and Madden, and Van. At first, not noticing the girl, they were for making a rough house, but as soon as they saw her, standing nice and gentle over near the fireplace, they simmered down good and plenty. For a while I was stumped, everything seemed so—so queer. But finally, I began introducing them all around. And, sir, the funniest thing was, that she seemed to know all about them beforehand. I was a little rattled but wound up by saying, 'This is Skimpole McLea's sister;—our chum, you know.'

"The fellows were n't 'on' right away,

so I had to come back at them again—said it all over once more, and then the girl, in order to help out, said, kind of anxious:

"'Yes, Skimpy—Skimpy McLea's sister—your *chum's* sister.'

"I never saw such a slow bunch in my life," said Jean disgustedly. "I thought they would never wake up, but finally Tom Brown—you would never have suspected it of him, of course,—suddenly had a lucid interval, and sang out:

"'Skimpy! Oh, yes! dear old Skimp! Why, he 's the finest, noblest, jolliest fellow in college!'

"With that," said Jean, "he went up to the girl, seized her by both hands and let on as if she were his long lost mother—he was that glad to see her. Oh! there 's nothing mean about Tom when once he catches on. It worked good with the girl, too. She warmed up to Tom like a kitten to a hot brick, and began to tell him what a fine chap he was, and how her brother had written such glowing accounts of him,—when all of a sudden there

was a sound on the steps like a cow learning to waltz, and then she said:

"'Oh, that must be Mr. Anderson. Dear Mr. Anderson—"Tubby," Skimpy calls him. He must be so funny!'"

"Say fellows," observed Tubby, with a perfectly serious countenance, "this is where I come in. Oh, I made good, all right, all right."

"The door opened and Tubby stood grinning on the threshold," continued Jean, "looking as if he had just escaped from the asylum. Of course I knew he was liable to make some awful break, so I went up to him to tip him off:

"'Tubby,' I said, 'this is Miss McLea, —Skimpy's sister—you know; don't you catch on?'"

"And do you know what that idiot said!" inquired Jean mournfully, looking about the room.

The fellows gazed up at him curiously.

"He said," continued Jean, his attitude betokening the most intense disgust:

"'Give it up. What's the answer?'"

Whereupon Tubby, wholly unmoved by this report of his dereliction, sank back on the floor with a sigh of sweet content.

"Sure thing," he said, "what else could I do? He had me up against a stiff proposition and I did n't know what to say."

"Well," went on Jean, "I grabbed Tubby by the coat and told him that this was Miss McLea—Skimpy's sister—and the lobster blurted out again:

"'But *who* the deuce is Skimpy McLea?' Oh," added Jean, shaking his fist at the fat figure of his friend as he lay comfortably on the rug, "I could have knocked his block off!"

"The poor girl, Miss McLea, was terribly upset—seemed ready to sink through the floor; and of course the only thing for me to do was to tell her that Tubby was shy a few in the upper story, and explain to her in a few well-chosen words that he was a damned fool."

Tubby beamed pleasantly while Jean continued:

"Miss McLea, as I said, was terribly

upset. She got awfully pale and began to carry on like all hysterics, saying that she might have known when she had been to her brother's poor lodgings and then come to these, that we were not his friends. And then she began to cry—yes, hang it all, to cry about her poor brother, how she had humiliated him, and all that rot—and then suddenly she flashed around on me, her eyes fairly spitting fire, and said:

"'How dared you? Why did you not tell me? It was a cruel, cruel joke!'

"Well, of course I was all in, but just at that moment the door opened, and a little bit of a faded woman, but with a very sweet, refined way about her, came into the room.

"'Why, Jeanne,' she said to the girl, 'you stayed so long! Your brother has not yet returned, so I came here thinking that you had found him.'

"Then she sized us fellows up, and began to look kind of queer about the gills, evidently suspecting something was n't quite according to Hoyle.

"'What is it?' she said, after she had

looked over each one of us in a searching kind of way, 'has anything happened to my son?'

"She seemed so weak and faint that—darn it all, fellows—I just had to hustle over and put her to the good. After I got her in a seat, I said:

"'Happened to him! Well I should say not! He's all right. You should have let him know you were coming. You see he has so many engagements, he—being so popular,—does n't get home till late.'

"And then I insisted that she should make tea for us—oh, I was in it good and plenty, but I was bound to see it through. I told her how fine it would be to have Skimpy's mother and sister make tea for us. And then I introduced the other fellows, Tom, and Madden and Van, as Skimpy's dearest friends, and"—here for some strange reason Jean's usually clear and distinct voice became somewhat choked, and his narrative began to lose some of its accustomed assurance—"and then she said to me:

"'Oh,—you are Mr. Pierce—Skimpy's best friend,'—and then she went on with a lot of hot air about how noble I had been to her darling son, about his being a poor man among all these rich students, and all that kind of rot. The girl tried to butt in and head her off,—she seemed awfully embarrassed—sort of caught on to the game, I suppose, but the old lady kept right on.

"'Tell me,' she says, 'how my dear boy looks? I can't believe he is so happy, so prosperous, until I see him with my own eyes. To think of his becoming such an athlete, too!'"

"Oh, that was a corker," interpolated Tubby—"Skimpy an athlete!—Wow! Next thing you know, they will have me on the crew as coxswain."

"And," continued Jean, "she spoke about how the fellows cheered him when he made a touch-down in the Dartmouth game. Gee! She had me up a stump then. Imagine that skinny grind making the team! But that was n't all. She went on to tell about the banquet we gave

in his honor, and about the beautiful verses he read. The daughter tried to butt in again, but the old lady was moving free and easy and there was no stopping her.

"'I must speak my heart out,' she says, 'these are all Skimpole's friends, and they will understand. If they had not appreciated him and taken him up, where would he be now? Sad, sad and lonely,'" continued Jean, with all the relish of a professional *raconteur*. "'Ah, his first letters! How my heart bled,' she said."

The men were listening attentively now, and even the irrepressible Tubby looked solemn. "'He wrote to me that he had n't a friend, and that he was so lonely—so lonely for me and Jeanne. Harvard was only a place for rich men, he said. It almost broke my heart. And then, one day, I wrote to him that I had decided to sell our little home. We could have lived very comfortably in lodgings until Skimpole became a lawyer and acquired a practice. I had a very good offer for the house, which would have

enabled me to send him more money. I wrote him of it. That night there came a telegram. It said: "Don't sell. Great news." Then came his letter telling us how the very best set of men in the University had taken him up; how good you all were to him, getting him all those pupils; taking a poor man in as one of you.'"

Here Jean paused and looked about upon his auditors, as if anticipating some interruption to his narrative. The men remained, however, quite still.

"Well," continued Jean after a moment of tense silence, "she went right on like this: 'We cried for joy that night, and after that we called you "our boys." Every letter of Skimpole's told us of some new, noble deed on your part.'"

"Gee," cried Tubby, "aren't you laying it on pretty thick?"

"Ah, cut it," exclaimed Bernard peremptorily, "let Jean go on with his spiel."

"And then she said," continued Jean, 'I love you all! you are all in my pray-

ers, all of you. I ask Heaven to be as good to you as you have been to my son.'"

Jean stopped, and an embarrassed silence followed. It was not exactly the kind of story that college men tell, yet they all felt that it was real, and that they were more or less intimately concerned with the recital. For a minute the room remained wrapped in utter quiet.

"Well," continued Jean, "after a while there came a knock at the door, and —who do you suppose stood there on the threshold?"

"It was Skimpy," announced Tubby with an effect that was wholly anti-climacteric.

"Yes," said Jean; "he stood there for a minute kind of dazed, and the rest of us were dazed too, at that. At last, fearing that Tubby might make one of his confounded breaks and put the old lady wise, I rushed over to him and grabbed him by the hand and pulled him into the room.

"'Hello!' I said, 'where in the devil have you been all the afternoon? You

see, we 've had to welcome your mother and sister for you, Skimpy, old man.' And then I gave him a hell of a clip on the shoulder so as to sort of bring him to a bit, for he still seemed to be about four miles up in the air—looked as if he had lost his last friend, instead of finding a whole bunch of them all on a sudden.

" Well, it was a darned awkward position, any way you look at it. I could n't help feeling sorry for Jeanne—Miss McLea—who, of course, was ' on,' and seemed dreadfully mortified. However, the old lady rushed over to him and hugged him fine and dandy, and Tom and Madden and Van did their duty nobly too. They grabbed him by the hand, sang out ' Skimpy, old man, glad to see you back,—where the deuce have you been? ' and things like that, until finally the chap appeared to feel a little bit at ease. And then Tubby, for a wonder, came to the centre like a little man and says ——"

"Ah, cut that out, Jean," interrupted Tubby with an unwonted diffidence.

"Shut up, Tubby," said Bernard. "What did he do, Jean?"

"Why he waltzed up to his Skimplets, and, putting both hands on his shoulders, said:

"'Look here, Skimpy, old man, I don't think it 's fair your devoting all your attention to these other guys when I stand to be flunked all down the line. Now, I want a little coaching in Geology 2, and in—in, well, in a little of everything if you 've got the time.'"

"Good for you, Tubby," exclaimed Bernard enthusiastically, "for once in your life you did the right thing."

"Well," responded Tubby sheepishly, "I guess I needed the coaching, did n't I?"

"What happened next?" asked Bernard.

"Oh, we had a regular heart-to-heart tea-fest,—Mrs. McLea sitting over there in the easy chair, her eyes glued on Skimpy, proud as a queen, while the girl ——

"Oh, yes," broke in Tubby, "while the

girl and you sneaked off into a corner and fussed to beat the band. By the way, Jean, was n't Miss McLea the girl you gave all your favors to at the last german?"

"Oh, you dry up, Tub," exclaimed Jean, flushing a brilliant red, "I guess that 's my own business.

"Well," he went on, "we finally settled down into a nice, sociable family party, everything running as smooth as grease, when the door burst open, and there stood Happy Thurston. He was n't 'wise,' and nobody had time to put him 'on,' when he saw the old lady calmly sipping her tea, and Skimpy seated on the arm of her chair, and—and me and Jea—Miss McLea having conversation, so of course he had to blurt out:

"'Hello! what 's up?'

"There was only one thing for me to answer," said Jean.

"'What *should* be up?' I said, serene and peaceful, trying to give him the wink, 'but that we are giving a little reception and tea to the mother and sister of our most intimate friend, Skimpole McLea!'

"Happy's eyes bulged for a moment, but he was game,—and, well—he stood for it. In fact, he came over and seized the little old lady by both hands, telling her about the unexpected pleasure, and all that sort of thing, and then he slapped Skimpy on the back so that he coughed up a mouthful of tea—and then ——"

"And then," interposed the ever alert Tubby, "he butted right in to join your little spoon séance, and proceeded to make himself solid with that awfully pretty sister. Oh, Happy's a winner, all right."

"Hush, fellows!" cried Jean from his perch on the window-seat as he chanced to glance down into the yard, "here comes the stroke oar. Look yonder!"

There was a scramble and rush toward the window, and a craning of necks and an indiscriminate waving of legs, as the men strove desperately to catch a glimpse of the new phenomenon.

CHAPTER XIII

MARIAN THORNE

WHAT the men saw was Marian and her stalwart brother Gerald standing under the shade of the elm tree. Thorne held his sister's hand in his own, caressingly, yet in a way reprovingly, and he spoke in a low, distinct tone, so that every word was conveyed to the band of ingenuous listeners in Warren Pierce's study.

"Marian," Thorne said, in his customary solemn voice, "I was surprised—disappointed to see you bow to that fellow Brown a while ago. Of all men in the University! How do you happen to know him? Don't you understand," he added bitterly, "that I detest him as a purse-proud, overbearing snob?"

"I met him at a tea one of the girls

gave," replied Marian timidly. "He seems very—very nice."

Thorne dropped her hand and strode impatiently up and down, occasionally stopping and glancing at his sister with a look of bitter reproach.

"I don't like any of that fast set," he said at last sternly. "A poor girl, such as you are, is much better without acquaintances of that kind. Nothing but harm can come from this sort of thing. Understand, Marian, dear, it is my earnest wish that you shall not speak to him again—remember, not even speak to him. I dislike Brown above any of them—except that conceited ass Madden. They despise us because we are poor. Well! Let them! I would rather be poor than —than ——"

"Oh," interrupted the girl anxiously, —"I don't think they feel that way, Gerald."

"Oh, yes, they do," he replied brusquely, "they 're all rotten with the pride of inherited money and—vices. You don't know what a miserable set they are.

They have n't any use for the man who has n't got the price."

"Oh, brother," pleaded Marian earnestly, laying a protesting hand on his shoulder, "don't say that; why, who knows but what it may be one of that set who is—is helping you through college?"

An ugly frown settled on Thorne's none too peaceful face.

"If I thought that," he replied savagely, putting her away from him roughly, "if I thought that—if I even dreamt of such a thing, why—I—I. But"—here he laughed bitterly, incredulously—"but, dear, you don't know them. Help me through college? Why, they are selfish to the core. They scarcely know I 'm in existence. I tell you, I don't belong to their set, nor they to mine, thank God! And, Marian, while we are talking of these things—why do I find you walking about the yard when I expressly told you to be extremely careful not to put yourself in the way of these rich loafers?"

"Oh, but Gerald, dear," replied the

girl, with the slightest tinge of resentment in her voice, " I was n't—was n't walking about the yard. I was merely doing what all the other girls do on Thursdays. It is quite customary. I was just going to Vespers, you know, and I did n't think you would mind my coming this way."

" Well," said Thorne gruffly, seemingly bent on finding fault, " I don't like your coming through this part of the grounds. There is no telling what humiliation you might be put to. Don't do it any more."

He started to enter the dormitory.

" Wait here a moment, dear, I wish to see Cartright. I 'll come back and take you home shortly."

But as he turned and saw her forlorn figure on the bench, his mood suddenly relented. Stepping quickly to her side he knelt down and lifted her face in his hands and looked into it affectionately, yearningly.

" Poor little motherless girl," he said in a broken voice, his huge, awkward frame shaking with emotion; " I 'm sometimes

harsh with you—unreasonable with you. But," he added, as he drew her to him in a rough embrace, while his words became almost unintelligible, "but you know, Marian, it 's all because you 're so dear to me. I would n't have anything happen to you for the world."

She trembled in his arms, and her head drooped upon his shoulder.

"You know it 's all because I love you so," he added hoarsely, "you know that, don't you, dear?"

"Yes—yes, Gerald," she sobbed. "I know, you are—too good to me, too good to me."

Thorne gently disengaged himself from her, and after patting her lovingly on the back, with that sense of embarrassment that all men feel in the presence of women's tears, he made his way into the dormitory.

The brief twilight of the early spring evening was rapidly dwindling away, and it was growing dark. As Marian sank back on the bench, her head bowed in her hands, lights began to appear in the win-

dows of the neighboring buildings, throwing into occasional relief the silhouette of a student lounging in an easy chair, or walking idly to and fro before a lamp. In Pierce's room, however, which directly overlooked the spot where the girl was sitting, the men had become strangely silent, except, of course, for the unfailing Tubby.

"Gee!" he whispered to the others, who still remained on the window-seat, gazing intently into the gloom, "I would hate to have that chap Thorne get real mad at me. It 's lucky he was n't around that day when Tom had that séance with ——"

"Hush, will you, you darned idiot!" exclaimed Jean; and then, quite irrelevantly, he began to pipe up in his sweet, pure tenor voice, to the humming accompaniment of the others:

Last night a nightingale woke me.

At the sound of the singing, Marian started timidly to rise from her seat, but just as she did so Wilton Ames made his appearance around the corner of the building.

"Marian!" he cried, catching sight of the figure on the bench.

"Hush!" cried the girl, looking nervously up at the window, and retreating to the other side of the tree.

"But, Marian! I 've been looking for you everywhere. Why were n't you at the gate?"

"Oh, Wilton!" cried the girl in great agitation, still glancing up at the window, whence the sound of the singing was wafted down like a gentle benediction, "I met Gerald—you must go away—go away quickly—he 's in there. He must n't see me talking with you. Please, *please* go away!"

"But I *must* see you. I 've waited to see you for days."

In an instant the whole manner of the girl changed.

"Oh, have you, dear?" she asked joyfully. "Have you really, Wilton? I—I thought you did n't care."

"Care!" he replied, grasping her firmly by both hands, and gazing down at her intently; "why, Marian, I think of

nothing else. I love you, oh, I love you!" he cried as he gripped her hands ruthlessly. "Why, listen, dearest. I've kept away from drink for two weeks—just for your sake. I've been studying hard too. And this summer I'm going to try to get some work, so that I can take care of you!"

"Oh, Wilton, are you really?" cried the girl looking up at him ecstatically through a film of tears; "do you mean you are going to—to marry ——"

Ames suddenly relaxed his grasp of the girl's hands, and there was a return to the old, accustomed weakness of his manner.

"Why," he said, turning from her awkwardly, "I thought we understood that, Marian. You know, I am wholly dependent upon my mother. Besides, they, —mother and Evelyn—don't know you," he added sinking miserably on the bench, "and we are—so—so unfortunate."

With all her noble nature and womanly unselfishness, she moved quickly to his side, and spoke to him soothingly, as a

mother would speak to a spoiled child suffering from an imagined injury.

"There, there, dear," she said, "I know you are right, of course you are quite right! Don't be impatient with me. Don't worry, dear. Everything will be all—all right."

"Worry!" he exclaimed petulantly, "oh, that 's what drives me wild. I don't do anything else but worry. It 's enough to drive a man to desperation," he added with colossal selfishness. "The fellows think I 'm weak,—dissipated. They don't know how I am tortured!"

"Oh, Wilton," cried the girl beseechingly, but in a voice so low that it could not be heard by those at the window, "promise me, dearest, that you won't drink again. I could n't bear to think that you should harm yourself because of me! Don't worry about me, dear," she continued, as she buried her head on his knee, "don't worry about me. We shall both be happy,—very, very happy."

Ames drew himself up suddenly, a

spark of his native manhood coming to his aid in this miserable crisis.

"Marian!" he cried, lifting her to her feet and, with a desperate effort, assuming a tone of authority. "I 'm going to do the right thing. Understand always, no matter what happens, that I love you sincerely, only I 'm so wretchedly poor and dependent." Reaching into his coat pocket he took out a slip of paper. "Here—take this, you may need it."

Marian held the piece of paper in the meagre light of a neighboring lamp, and then drew back, aghast, looking at Ames in horror.

"A check!" she exclaimed. "Money? —you offer me money?"

"Don't be foolish, Marian," replied Ames in very manifest confusion and averting his eyes from her intent gaze. "It is merely to be used in case of an emergency. You know you may—you may want to leave some day, and ——"

"Oh, but Wilton, Wilton!" pleaded the girl in a heart-broken tone, "you surely would n't wish to—oh, Wilton,

dear. It says, 'Tom Brown, for three hundred dollars!' Oh, Wilton, dear, what am I to think?"

"Hush!" he replied sternly. "Brown lent it to me. I tell you it's all right. Don't!" he cried, as Marian tried to thrust the check back into his pocket. "Keep it, if you have any regard for my happiness. You can get it cashed anywhere. You need n't use it unless it is absolutely necessary. Hush! Here are a bunch of the fellows," he added, as the sound of talking and singing came from around the dormitory.

"When shall I see you again, Wilton?" asked Marian wistfully.

"I don't know," he said hastily. "I 'll send you word. Good-bye. Don't worry!"

Whereupon he kissed her lightly, and hurried off, while Marian, dazed and forlorn, sank back limply on the bench.

"Say, fellows," cried the observant Tubby, who, despite the singing, had kept a keen eye on what was going forward, "he 's kissed her! Gee, did n't you hear it? And he gave her something, too!"

CHAPTER XIV

TOM'S PROBATION ENDED

SCARCELY had Marian dropped back helplessly on the bench which was now hidden by the deep shadow of the tree trunk, when a crowd of men headed by Madden made their appearance around the corner and stopped before the dormitory. Perceiving the dim outline of figures in Jean de Reszke's window, they proceeded, as if by well-rehearsed agreement, to address them after the manner of operatic recitative, several of the fellows undertaking the rôle of orchestral instruments, especially of the bass viol, indicated by an occasional hoarse "Zim! Zim!"

"Jean de Reszke, Jean de Reszke, are you there?" ("Zim! Zim!")

Whereupon Jean, in his clarion voice, responded antiphonally:

"Aye, 't is true, 't is very true, I am here!"

("Zim! Zim!" from the industrious orchestra below.)

At this point Madden assumed the burden of the song.

"Are you alone," he chanted in excellent imitation of the Wagnerian style, "or are you solitary?"

"I am alone," warbled Jean to an improvised air, entering blithely into the spirit of the performance, "except, alas, for those who are with me!"

("Zim! Zim!" again came from the bass viols, who, being largely composed of upper classmen, felt that they were privileged to comport themselves with the dignity due the occasion.)

"'T is well," declaimed Madden, striking a high key in a very dramatic manner. "Then we will ascend, ascend,—and have a little practice with thee."

"Ascend, thou lobsterinos," retorted Jean promptly, resorting to the Italian

method of delivery. And, while he launched forthwith into an air from Donizetti, the others marched solemnly through the doorway, emitting a more or less straggly "Amen," in feeble imitation of the church service.

In a few moments a light shone brightly from Jean's window, and the men, many of whom were members of the 'Varsity Glee Club, broke forth into a capital rendition of the old favorite "Integer Vitae," with a surety of tone, swing of rhythm, and purity or harmony which almost invariably characterize such impromptu performances.

In the meantime Marian had remained seated on the bench unnoticed and motionless, but when the words of the beautiful old glee were borne down to her through the open window by the rollicking band of students, she started and trembled violently, as though stung to the quick. "Integer Vitae!" They seemed such a cruel, pointed mockery—those inspired verses of the fine old Roman poet! Poor, tortured, helpless creature that she was, she

shrank still further back into the shade of the protecting elm.

"'Don't worry!'" she repeated bitterly. "He said 'Don't worry'! As if I could do anything but worry. Oh, Wilton, Wilton, what shall I do? I love you so, dearest; I love you so! But how can I help worry? Oh," she added piteously, while the tears streamed down her cheeks, "if there were only some one who would be friendly with me, somebody who could sympathize ——"

At this critical juncture the stocky, exuberant figure of Tom Brown appeared as if by magic under the light of the corner lamp. He was very evidently in high good humor, and was engaged in alternately whistling and hugging himself spasmodically for very joy.

"Oh, Evie," he muttered, half aloud, half to himself, "what a corker you are! I knew you could n't stay real mad with your own Tom. The front parlor for me again every Sunday night," he chortled ecstatically. "The horse-hair sofa for little Tommy. Oh, gee, just to think

Tom Brown.

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I 'm solid once more, and all this damn nonsense has blown over! Now, why could n't that dear girl have seen things in their right light from the beginning? But it 's just like women. They 're so darned unreasonable,—only Evelyn is such a sweet, delightfully unreasonable little creature. Hello! What 's this?"

He stopped abruptly when he saw the forlorn figure huddled on the bench, and then stepped over to her curiously.

"Oh," she cried apprehensively, recalling the parting injunction of her brother, "Mr. Brown, you must go away. Indeed you must. It—it is n't right for me to speak to you."

"I—er—oh, is it you, Miss Thorne? Beg pardon,—it 's so dark, I could n't make you out. I trust," he added in some embarrassment, "that you did n't mind any little thing I may have been saying in my sleep. You know, I 'm a sonnambulist—somnambulist—which the deuce is it, any way?" he added in comic vexation. "One book says somnambulist, and the other sonnambulist, so how is a poor devil

to know? By the way, did you ever see the opera—Sembrich—in—night gown—candle—and all that sort of thing?" Here Tom reached the end of his rope, and awaited desperately for assistance from Marian.

Cheered by the irresistible good nature of his presence ——

"Oh, Mr. Brown," she exclaimed with feminine inconsistency, and apparently forgetting all about her brother's prohibition, "I have waited to see you for so long! I have wanted to—to apologize if I—if I brought you any—any unhappiness by being in your room that miserable day. Everything seemed so awkward,—and I was so confused that I left without saying a word."

"No, did you though?" returned Tom earnestly. "The fact is, I was sort of rattled myself—thought I was dreaming, kind of a nightmare, you know." And then he stepped over to her, his face suddenly beaming with joy, and, making an elaborate bow, he removed the bunch of violets from the lapel of his coat, gazing at them with idiotic adoration.

"Miss Thorne," he announced, with a lame assumption of solemnity, "you see before you the happiest man in Cambridge to-night."

"Oh, I am so glad," said Marian impulsively. "Then there were no—no awkward consequences from that horrid afternoon?"

"Awkward? Consequences?" replied Tom gleefully. "I tell you, my dear young lady, I 'm solid again,—that is," he added hurriedly, "I 'm on probation, and you know that means I 'm wholly forgiven. At least," he said, with a tinge of anxiety in his voice, "probation means forgiveness, don't you think, Miss Thorne, especially when there is nothing to forgive?"

"You don't, then," said Marian gently, "you don't despise me, do you? You know—I ——"

"Despise you!" cried Tom warmly, and beaming down upon her with the honest glow of good fellowship, "why, what ever put such a foolish notion into your head? Despise you? Why, I think you are a brick!"

Upon which he held out both hands to her, and she, carried away by the exuberance of his spirits, clasped them warmly.

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Brown; you are so generous, so kind—thank you, thank you!"

At this interesting stage of affairs the huge, awkward frame of Gerald Thorne appeared abruptly in the doorway of the dormitory. For a moment he stared at the two as if stunned. Then, recovering himself, he said, in a solemn, almost sepulchral voice:

"Thank him, Marian? What do you mean?" He took a few steps nearer and glowered on Tom with an expression of infinite scorn. "Why should you thank *him,* Marian?" he repeated sternly.

His sister cast upon him a glance full of fear.

"Oh I—I—it was nothing," she replied almost gasping with terror, and vainly endeavoring to release her hands from the flagrant delict of Tom's hearty grasp.

"It was nothing, eh?" thundered Ger-

ald, approaching the two threateningly. "What did I tell you only a few minutes ago? What were you thanking him for, I say?"

Tom, who up to this time had been wholly dumbfounded by the sudden apparition of the sinister Thorne and his upbraiding demeanor—so much so in fact that he unconsciously retained a tenacious grasp of Marian's hands—now began to come to.

"Why," he said cheerfully, "my dear fellow, "there is no occasion for all this tragedy. Your sister, Miss Thorne, was —was merely thanking me for these violets that I was giving her," he added, as he finally released his hold, but allowed the violets to remain in her hand.

"Oh, is that so," replied Thorne with a sneer as he stepped up to them, livid with suppressed rage. "Well," he cried, snatching the unfortunate bouquet from his sister's grasp and hurling it on the ground in a highly dramatic fashion, "allow me to tell you that my sister can dispense with your attentions as well as with

your violets." And, putting Marian's hand on his arm, he strode off majestically by her side into the darkness.

For several moments Tom looked after their retreating forms in utter bewilderment, and then leaned weakly up against the friendly elm for support.

"Well, I 'll be jinged!" he exclaimed finally, in genuine amazement, "would n't that freeze ——

But, alas, his troubles were not over yet. For, while he had been surreptitiously slipping the violets into Marian's hand, two girlish figures, unnoticed by him and by Marian and Gerald, had loomed up under the murky shadow of the tree, and had remained standing there, silent witnesses of the brief but fatal colloquy with Thorne. And they had remained there, speechless and immovable, when Tom began his dazed soliloquy. It is perhaps needless to say that the two figures were those of Edith and Evelyn, who were adopting this rather devious course on their return home from Vespers.

"Evie!" exclaimed Tom, when at last he had identified these new arrivals.

But that young lady bent on him a glance of freezing significance, the full effect of which was, however, unfortunately dissipated in the gloom.

"Don't you dare to speak to me!" she cried. "Don't you dare even to ever look at me again." And seizing the arm of her companion, who also appeared to be affected by a certain sense of vicarious injury, she swept proudly down the walk, in the wake of Marian and Thorne.

"Gee whiz!" exclaimed Tom, dropping weakly on the bench, and staring down at the fateful, scattered violets. "Gee whiz —not even on probation!"

And, as merciless Fate would have it, there were wafted down from the room where Jean de Reszke was holding forth with his friends, the words of the beautiful, clinging old refrain:

"Sweet violets, I plucked them and brought them to Thee!"

CHAPTER XV

COLTON, THE TRAITOR

THE thirtieth of April turned out to be a magnificent spring day—absolutely cloudless, with very little wind, and enough spice of the dead winter in the air to put Coach Hall's carefully trained protégés on edge and encourage them to break the record over the old 1⅞ mile course from the Longwood Bridge down the river to the end of the Basin.

At the 'Varsity Boat-house, three miles up the river, the crew and substitutes and coach, together with the devoted Tubby, had assembled long before the time appointed for the firing of the pistol.

Although this was no Yale race—the aquatic event of the year in which, of course, Harvard is principally concerned, —it must be admitted that there was a

considerable degree of nervousness and apprehension among the members of the crew, in spite of the fact, or perhaps because of the fact, that the odds were largely in their favor. The men had repeatedly made excellent time in practice over the course, but, as is always the case when contending against an unknown crew, especially a crew from England where rowing is developed as the highest department of athletics, there was a very palpable element of uncertainty, and, to use the expressive, if somewhat trite, phrase of Mr. Bud Hall, they one and all realized the circumstance that they were "up against it." They might win with ease, and then again—they might be wholly outclassed. True, there had been plenty of opportunities to witness the Englishmen's performances over the same course, but your seasoned boatman will be the last man in the world to lay any particular stress on such tests. Conditions of tide, and weather, and wind, and the dozens of other matters that must be taken into consideration in determining a

crew's actual worth, vary so much from day to day,—ay, even from hour to hour, that comparative "times" are little to be depended upon.

There is no more sensitive, delicately constituted organization in the world than a highly trained college athletic team, who are aware, not only that they are burdened temporarily with the good repute of the 'Varsity, but also of the possibly deplorable fact that their friends have backed them with the coin of the realm, even to the bursting point, and that they are looked upon to redeem this confidence. All this spirit of apprehension passes off, perhaps, during the actual conflict, but the tension before actual hostilities are begun is great—far greater than the general public conceives. Thus it was that the atmosphere of the whole boat-house seemed charged with an electric spirit of nervousness,—the members of the crew assuming a confidence which they did not altogether feel.

Among those, however, who betrayed

not the slightest sign of agitation, though his very soul was wrapped up in the event, was Tom Brown. Arrayed in an emergency uniform of white flannel, and canvas shoes, so that he might make a charge to rowing clothes on the shortest possible notice, he lounged about the lower floor of the boat-house with an air of indifference and nonchalance that was in marked contrast with the very obvious, if subdued, unrest displayed by the others. As he passed, during his promenade, near the front door, he met Colton and Ames entering.

"Hello, Wilton," greeted Tom in his accustomed hearty tone. "What are you doing here? How do you do, Colton? How 's the betting?"

"Never saw anything like it," replied Colton, with what was for him a very extraordinary manifestation of enthusiasm. "The whole town has gone crazy. It looks like a cinch for the 'Varsity."

"Odds holding good?"

"Good? I should say so," returned

Colton, eying Tom narrowly as he spoke. "Why, in some places you can get three to one on Harvard."

"No, is that so?" inquired Tom, his eyes large with astonishment. "Three to one? Why—say, Colton," he added, his sporting blood aroused, "do you think you could place a little more money for me? I 've already gone the limit of my allowance, but, you know, it 's a funny thing, even my old dad—class of '76, you know—has got the fever. Just sent me a wire that I could go as far as I liked on our boys. Of course I don't want to be reckless, but, at two to one ——"

"I 'll tell you what I 'll do," said Colton confidentially, with the air of one revealing a "good thing" as a particular favor. "There is a friend of mine down at the Union Boat Club who, strange to say, thinks these foreigners stand a show of winning. He 's even ready to put up even money on the Beefeaters. Now, if you say so, I 'll lay any little bet for you on those terms. He 's a 'greeny' I guess, but there 's no reason why you

should n't pick up his money if he chooses to let it lie around loose."

"Even money!" cried Tom, staring in astonishment at the smug, inscrutable face of the other. "Why, the man 's mad. No. It 's too much like robbery. You can lay $500 for me if you like at two to one, but I won't hold the chap up at even money. I believe in giving a fellow a chance."

At this point Ames stepped between the two and placed his hand on Tom's shoulder.

"Kid," he said earnestly, his usually pale face slightly flushed, "don't you do it. Don't you bet. Our fellows might not win."

"Not win," laughed Tom incredulously. "What 's got into you, Wilton? Don't you suppose I know what the crew can do, especially with that funereal giant Thorne at stroke? It 's like taking the milk bottle from baby." And then turning to Colton he added. "Go ahead, old man; place $500 for me—two to one, will you?"

"Sure thing," replied Colton, making a memorandum in his note-book, at the same time bestowing a significant scowl upon Ames, who was the very picture of chagrin.

At this moment the excited, corpulent form of Tubby Anderson might have been observed at the top of the stairway leading to the lockers and dressing-rooms.

"Say, Colton," he cried eagerly, "put me down for $25, will you? And by the way, I should n't mind the even money proposition, if your friend is so cocksure."

"Twenty-five? So bad as that?" inquired Colton with a grim smile. "All right—down you go—even money."

"And say," continued Tubby, "Bud Hall wants all the subs up here to get into their rowing things right away."

"All right," replied Tom, moving toward the stairway. He turned around abruptly, however, and, after looking yearningly at Ames for a moment, drawled out:

"I sa-ay, Wilton, your sister, Evelyn

—*Miss* Evelyn—is she—er—quite well?"

"She does n't seem very cheerful," replied Ames.

"Great!" responded Tom, slapping his leg in delight. "No—no! That is,—it 's too bad, Wilton. I 'm deucedly sorry she is n't cheerful. Now, if there 's any little thing I can do to jolly her along—by the way," he broke off suddenly, as a fearful thought struck him, "does Happy Thurston see her very often? Dear old Happy, you know—he 's such a nice fellow. Oh, never mind. It 's none of my business, of course, only I 'm kind of—of interested in Happy. He 's such a dear friend of mine, you know."

Bud Hall, the coach, here appeared at the head of the staircase. He was garbed, as ever, in his crimson sweater, and an experienced eye could detect the fact that he was in a highly wrought-up condition, a circumstance which he was making herculean efforts to conceal for the sake of an example to his charges, several of whom, being new to the crew, were suffering from more or less acute attacks

of that dread disease, "stage fright," which so often affects the very best athletes at a critical moment.

"Kid Brown!" he shouted, to an accompaniment of strong words which are regarded as the prerogative of the professional coach, and which he is fain to take full advantage of, "what the devil do you mean by loafing around down there when I 've given orders for all you subs to get into your pants? Do you take this for a Sunday-school picnic? Have n't I got enough trouble without chasing after you like a nurse? Come up here or I 'll knock your block off!"

Tom, thus adjured, and having finished his highly satisfactory and rhetorical address to Ames, ran lightly up the steps to join the eager, excited crowd who were preparing for the momentous event of the day.

And, as if making point of the fact that Mr. Bud Hall already had troubles enough to bear, the front door of the boathouse opened, and Gerald Thorne entered, looking, if possible, more sepulchral, more

solemn than ever. On seeing him the coach almost danced for very rage.

"Well, what the ——," he exclaimed. "Where have *you* been all this time? Have you got it in for me? Do you want to make me bughouse? Did n't you know you was to be here over an hour ago?"

Thorne stopped as he was about to mount the steps, a peculiar dejection in his manner.

"I 'm very sorry, Bud," he said. "I tried to see my sister before coming over to the boat-house—to get a little encouragement from her." Here he looked around on Colton and Ames, and his manner became even more diffident, more awkward. "You see," he continued apologetically, "I 'm not situated like the other fellows here. I have no—no friends to—give me the glad hand when anything like this is going on. So I stopped, as I said, to see my sister. I thought perhaps she might give me a little send-off, and it might be good luck for all of us. I waited for her, but she was n't there; that 's what kept me late."

"Well, never mind about excuses now," exclaimed Hall brusquely, "we'll give you all the send-off you need. You come on up here and get into your pants."

When Thorne had disappeared into the locker room, closely followed by the coach and Tubby, who, despite the fact that he was to take no active part in the proceedings, betrayed an agitation and anxiety wholly at variance with his generally chubby, serene aspect, Colton, left alone below with Ames, turned viciously upon the latter.

"What the deuce do you mean," he snarled, "by telling Brown not to bet?"

"I want to tell everybody," replied Ames doggedly. "I feel as if I must shout it aloud."

"Oh, you do, do you," cried Colton passionately, now thoroughly exasperated, "you would like to shout it aloud, eh? Give the whole snap away, eh? Why you—you make me tired. You confounded idiot, do you want to queer the whole thing? Why the deuce don't you pull yourself together and make some coin

on your own account, instead of coming this high-handed saint game? Hang it all, don't you know we 've got the whole business fixed? I 'll lend you some cash if you ——"

"No you won't!" shouted Ames, turning on his persecutor fiercely, for once rousing himself from the attitude of inferiority and submission in which he usually found himself in the presence of the older man, "you won't, I say! You 've got me where you want me. I 've done this low-down trick because you forced me to do it. I 've got Marian—Miss Thorne, to agree to leave town to-day because—because," he said, his voice trembling pathetically, "because I requested her to do so, and she believes I am about to follow her! And I 've given her all the money I could scrape together and borrow to go away with. But if I had a thousand dollars this minute, I 'd put it on the 'Varsity. Damn you," he cried wildly, gazing at Colton defiantly, "I 'd put it every cent on the 'Varsity!"

Colton remained for a moment silent,

regarding Ames with a look of unspeakable disgust. At length, gripping his walking-stick nervously, he stepped up to him and stared at him long and searchingly.

"Oh, ho!" he said, finally. "So you would bet it all on the 'Varsity, would you? What a fine, loyal chap you are. You would send this unfortunate, unprotected girl away, for fear of your own skin, but you would bet a losing game on the 'Varsity. Bah! What kind of a hero do you take yourself to be, anyhow? But look here, my man," he added suspiciously, "you 're not playing me any low-down tricks? The girl 's really going to leave, is n't she? You 've carried out our agreement as I told you?"

"You left me no alternative," replied Ames sullenly. "I 've done just as I told you. She has probably left town by this time."

Colton reached into his pocket and took out a sealed and addressed envelope.

"I've got no grudge against you, Ames," he said slowly, "but I won't allow

this scheme to fall through on account of your monkey business. I have here," he continued, showing the envelope, " a message from Miss Thorne to her brother, telling him she has just left town, and begging him to follow. You told her to send such a note, did you not? "

" I told her to inform her brother that she was going away," replied Ames weakly.

" Well," said Colton threateningly, still not altogether absolved from his suspicion, " if the message does n't show up before the race, this little note will answer the purpose, though I wrote it myself, anonymously. When Thorne receives this note he will, if I know him—and I feel quite sure that I do—rush off after his sister in spite of all the boat races in the world. And listen to me, Ames," he went on sternly, " I 'm not going to lose any money by you; there 's too much at stake, and if everything does n't come up to schedule, you know what I 'll do." He stepped still closer, almost thrusting his evil face into that of the younger man.

"That 's all. I guess you 'll be good. But if you fail me, I 'd like to see you explain the situation to Thorne. A fine, powerful fellow, is n't he? One of those fellows who don't care whether school keeps or not, when they 're real mad. And," he added significantly, "he loves his sister more dearly than his life. An ugly customer, under certain conditions, eh?"

CHAPTER XVI

THE NEW STROKE OAR

WITH a scramble and a thumping and a succession of jumps the eight stalwart young men representing the Harvard crew, together with the coxswain, and half a dozen "subs," came crowding down the narrow staircase headed by the important and now intensely excited Mr. Bud Hall, coach. As is the case with many professional coaches, Mr. Hall's general bearing was at no time remarkable for its suavity or gentle complacence, being rather a cross between the attitude of a mother hen toward her erring and recalcitrant brood and of a father interviewing a wayward son in the proverbial woodshed. To-day, as the time for the race approached, the crisis for which he had toiled laboriously and conscientiously

for months, and which to him had a far greater importance and significance than the election of a President, his agitation, based upon the honest concern he felt for the outcome of the event, reached its climax. Therefore, as a means of appearing at ease, he had adopted the usual but perhaps not wholly successful method of berating his charges in a manner that, under ordinary circumstances, or if he had been anything less than a coach, might have called for serious resentment—perhaps even accompanied by personal chastisement.

"Now, look here, fellows," he said to the crew as they lined up, on the lower floor of the boat-house in the narrow space between the suspended rows of shells, "that lobster of an English manager was here a while ago to get a look at you and maybe offer a few patronizing remarks. But I told him you was n't dressed. He wanted to bluff you—see?"

The men said nothing, but continued to gaze at the small, wiry figure of their coach and awaited further exhortation.

"That's what he wants to do," continued Mr. Hall earnestly, working his arms about with oratorical vigor. "But you fellows will wipe a little of that molasses off his face before the day is over, or my name 's not Bud Hall.

"Remember, now," he went on, with tears of anxiety in his voice, "I 've done everything a man could do to train you down to an edge for to-day's race, and if any son-of-a-gun of you goes back on me, I 'll—I 'll—hang it all," he said, resorting to his customary dreadful threat, "I 'll knock his block off. Don't forget to put every inch of power into the stroke as soon as the blade catches the water. Don't let anybody think that somebody else is going to do his work for him. And above all, for heaven's sake," he added, in a fever of agitation, "don't get excited! Remember that the odds are in your favor and your friends and every Harvard man in the country has put up thousands of dollars on you to win out. You can't afford to lose their money. It would be a rank disgrace and shame.

"And you, Thorne," he went on tumultuously, singling out the huge form of the stroke-oar, whose face, topped by a shock of black hair, wore its usual solemn aspect—an expression certainly not calculated to inspire his fellows with overconfidence or even with enthusiasm, "you know, and we all know, that the race practically depends upon you."

The fellows surged about Thorne and the coach, making them the centre of a curious, absorbed audience. The big stroke-oar towered above his weazened preceptor even as an oak might have towered above a slender sapling. Truly had Cartright said that the young man's exercise with the axe down in the backwoods of Tennessee had given him "an enviable bunch of muscle." To employ a somewhat trite phrase in such cases, the sinews of his neck "stood out like whip cords," and he had that sloping of the shoulders peculiar to men of rowing experience, and indicative of tremendous "pulling" power. His thighs and calves were gnarled and knotted like those of

some Greek god in a classical statue, while his arms and chest were those of a sturdy blacksmith. Little wonder, then, that Hall regarded him as the very apple of his eye, the one indispensable man in the crew,—a human engine capable almost in himself of winning the race from the Englishmen. Thus it was that he addressed him with a special tenderness and anxiety, somewhat, perhaps, as a Spartan mother might have addressed her son on venturing forth into the shock of battle.

"There never has been any such time made over this course," he continued earnestly, "as under your stroke, but you 're up against men to-day. I 've seen 'em, and you 've got to light up all the powder that 's in you. Remember the instructions I 've given you. Stroke the boys easy at the start; let the other fellows wear themselves out if they want to, and when you get near the finish, well down below the Harvard Bridge, why, row like hell—take 'em up as high as 40 a minute if you want to. These Englishmen are overconfident and are going to start off at a

racking clip, just to show us some fancy work and see if they can get you rattled the first throw out of the box. But don't you do it. Go easy, don't get flustered, and put all your work in the last half mile. And Thurston," he said, abruptly turning to the latter individual, who rowed "No. 3" and who had been the source of some anxiety on the part of Mr. Hall on account of his disposition to take the matter of stroking the crew into his own hands, "if you get fussed and kick up a muck, just you jump out of the boat and drown yourself. You 'll be more good dead than alive.

"Now, fellows," he wound up with a sweeping gesture that included all his hearers—both the crew and substitutes, and even Tubby Anderson, who in the absorption of the moment had attached himself to the annular throng surrounding Thorne and the coach—"put your mind on winning, every one of you and forget that there 's anything in the world for you to-day but good old Harvard!"

It was a long oration for Mr. Hall, but

feeling that the occasion demanded an unusual effort, he had nobly risen to the exigencies of the situation and had exhausted all his rhetorical resources to stimulate the crew to their best efforts. The affair was now "up to them"; he could do no more.

With a hearty cheer for their coach, the men made their way toward one of the large doorways on the river side of the boat-house, leading down to the water by means of a gangway. The shell had already been placed on the float, in readiness, at the coxswain's command, to be poised aloft and dropped into the water. As the crew crowded toward the doorway, Colton entered hurriedly at the front with a note in his hand and sang out to Hall:

"I say, Bud—one moment. A messenger boy asked me to hand this note to Thorne. It 's marked 'Urgent.'"

Hall swung around and seized Colton's wrist, his small, wiry frame fairly quivering with exasperation.

"Well, I 'll be ——," he said, making

a futile attempt to snatch the note from the other's grasp. "Don't you, an old rowing man, know better than to try to deliver messages to a member of the crew before a race? He can't have it, confound it all, he can't have it!"

"But I tell you," insisted Colton, while the two struggled sharply in the doorway, Hall endeavoring to keep the other from passing through on to the gangway, "it 's marked 'Urgent.' Maybe it 's very important. He *must* have it. Hey, there, Thorne!"

Thorne, hearing his name called, stepped back into the boat-house.

"Here 's a note for you," cried Colton, still scuffling with the coach.

"But I say you can't have it," replied the latter desperately. "It 's against all the rules. Thorne, go back to the boat, man! Go back, damn it, I tell you!"

"Oh, that 's all right, Bud," said Thorne quietly, as he reached over the latter's head and took the note from Colton's outstretched hand. "There 's no harm in this. It 's my sister's writing.

She 's probably sending me a word of good luck. You know I told you I did n't see her when I went to her room."

"But it 's against the rules. Hang it all, man," fairly shouted Hall, stamping his feet in impotent rage, "am I boss here or not?"

"Oh, it 'll do no harm to read it," continued Thorne, who was quite as determined as the coach, though outwardly he appeared calm.

As Thorne tore open the envelope, Hall looked around at the knot of the crew who had gathered in the broad doorway and were staring at the proceedings with open-eyed curiosity.

"There—you see—men," he cried furiously, "that 's what comes of not learning how to obey orders."

Thorne paid him no attention. His eyes were fairly glued on the sheet of blue paper that he held in his hand.

"Well ——" snapped the coach impatiently.

Still Thorne regarded him not, but stared at the note as though fascinated.

"Well," I say, Thorne," shouted Hall, "here it is only an hour before the start, and we've got to be towed three miles down the river. We can't wait here forever while you run through your correspondence."

Even then Thorne paid him no heed, but stood with gaze transfixed on the letter.

"Thorne! I say, damn it all," cried the coach, beside himself with passion, "the race! The race, man, *the race!*"

At last Thorne appeared to become conscious of his surroundings. Slowly dropping his hand containing the note, he gazed stupidly first at Hall, then at Colton, then at the curious crowd of his fellows standing in the doorway. And as he looked at them it seemed as if he had suddenly been stricken with some great, soul-wrecking grief. His brilliant black eyes stared wildly, there were great drops of perspiration on his brow, and his face, usually pale, had taken on an unnatural, waxy hue, like to that of death.

"The race, Thorne!" again shouted

Hall hoarsely. "What in —— are you standing there like that for?"

Then suddenly Thorne broke into a boisterous, mocking, mirthless laugh.

"The race!" he cried, crushing the note convulsively in his hand. "I 'll not row a race to-day!"

For a moment there was intense silence while the others stared at the big stroke-oar as if he had instantly gone mad,—as, indeed, they had good reason to believe. It was Tubby who was the first to find words to express the general astonishment and dismay.

"Not row? Gee! What the deuce ——"

Tubby's voice served to rouse Thorne to his senses. With a cry of anguish he abruptly turned his back on the men and bounded up the stairs, two steps at a time, tearing at his sweater as he ran. The crew and substitutes gazed after him in helpless amazement, while Colton, who had drawn a little apart from the others, looked on the proceedings with an ill-concealed smile of satisfaction. Thorne's movement, however, galvanized Hall into

action, and he sped after the retreating figure swearing and expostulating.

"Oh, I sa-ay," drawled Tom, working his way through the crowd at the door, and looking at the coach as he vanished from view at the top of the stairway, "what 's up?"

"Hell 's up!" responded Madden blankly.

"Oh, Kid," almost wept Thurston, "we 're done for; it 's all off—we 're done for."

"Oh, gee!" cried Tubby, as he gazed dumbfounded at the others, "my bets, my bets! Oh, fellows, chase up there and make him row. He 's *got* to row;—hang it all, why don't you go up there and make him row? Gee whiz, my bets ——"

At this instant the distracted figure of the coach appeared at the head of the stairway and ran pell-mell down into the crowd, tearing his hair and almost gibbering in his excitement.

"The man—Thorne," he shouted, "he 's crazy! I can't do a thing with him. He won't say a word. He 's putting on his

street clothes. Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord!" Whereupon he fairly danced up and down the floor, while the men groaned in sympathy.

Suddenly Hall, realizing, in spite of this disaster that threatened to destroy at one blow all his confident hopes of success, the responsibility that rested upon him as coach, stopped, and glaring at Tom wildly, said in a heart-broken tone:

"We 've got to put a sub in."

There was another groan from the crowd.

"Don't lose your nerve, boys," he exclaimed, with a desperate attempt at reassurance. "I 've got to put Tom in at stroke!"

There was another groan, in which Tubby joined with heartfelt agony.

"Oh, I sa—ay," cried Tom, whom the rapidity and unexpectedness of recent events had rendered half paralyzed with astonishment. "Oh, I sa—ay, Bud, what the de ——"

Hall stepped up to Tom and laid his

hands almost affectionately on his shoulders.

"Look here, Kid," he said, speaking very solemnly, his voice trembling in a manner that was quite unusual, "this fellow Thorne is a mucker. I 've said it all along, and this proves it. I ought to have known better than to put such a lobster on the crew—a fan who don't know what 's due to his college and his friends, —though Lord knows he *can* row. Now, Tom, I 've got to put you in. You 've been faithful in practice this year, even if you did n't seem to have a look-in to make the crew. Well, now is your chance. You 've done good work, but Harvard will look to you to-day for better work that you ever did before. You 've got the nerve and the judgment, Kid, and it 's up to you to make good and stroke the fellows first over the finish line. We 've all been thrown down at the last minute by this—farmer, but we 've still got a chance if you do what I know you can do. Go in and take stroke, Kid, and win, or—or, damn it all, *bust your gizzard!*"

The fierce light of battle danced in Tom's eyes. Row stroke on the 'Varsity crew! He, Tom Brown, a mere sub! Oh, if he could only make good, as Hall had urged,—how proud he would be, how proud his dear old dad would be! How proud Evelyn ——

"I will," he shouted.

A mighty cheer went up from the crew who, strangely enough, felt a new enthusiasm with the knowledge that they were to be stroked by Tom Brown—a favorite with them all, almost an idol with some. Once more they broke for the float, from which the shell, under the crisp, authoritative command of the coxswain, was raised and then dropped into the water, in true oarsmanship fashion, preparatory to being towed down to the starting point by the launch *John Harvard.*

Scarcely had they disappeared when Thorne, hatless, his hair dishevelled, looking, as Hall had said, as if he had suddenly gone crazy, came running down the stairs, dashed out of the front door, and thence over the Boyleston Bridge toward Cam-

bridge, pulling on his coat as he rushed recklessly along.

Colton stood looking after him with a grim smile of complacence.

"It worked beautifully," he said softly to himself, "beautifully. Over three thousand on the English! Not a bad day's profits." Here he became aware of the presence of Tubby, who stood at the opposite door staring off down the river whither the crew were disappearing on the launch,—the shell, containing a single occupant with outstretched oars to keep a balance through the water, being towed behind down to the starting point below Longwood Bridge.

"Oh, gee!" wailed Tubby, "my bets, my bets!—and I 've discounted my allowance for a whole year." And then, catching sight of Colton, he moaned:

"Colton, would you mind seeing that friend of yours and cancelling my bet?"

Colton smiled affably and shook his head.

"I 'm afraid it 's too late, my dear fellow, though I must admit this unexpected

turn of affairs is rather discouraging. But come, let 's take the *Veritas* down for the Basin and see the finish."

And as the two boarded the other launch, which was to pick up the subs and manager and carry them down to the Union Boat Club, at the lower end of the Basin, Tubby repeated dolefully to himself:

" Finish? Yes—I see my finish all right. Oh, my bets, my bets! "

CHAPTER XVII

THE RACE

THE *John Harvard,* having on board the coach, crew, and subs, and towing the delicate racing machine, proceeded down the river at a business-like clip. As it passed under the Boylston Bridge, which leads from Soldiers' Field into Cambridge, it was greeted by a wild yell of encouragement from a crowd of small boys and others who had mounted this vantage point for the purpose of seeing the opening act of the aquatic drama which was soon to have its dénouement farther down the river. The college men on the launch acknowledged these hearty salutations by friendly wavings of the hands, and the boat continued on down the stream, passing under a succession of bridges, until it finally reached the

starting-point just below the Longwood Bridge. As the launch hove to, the shell was drawn alongside, the men got aboard and awaited the coming of the English crew.

The latter had made ready for the race at the Boston Athletic Association boat-house, at the end of the Basin, immediately alongside the Union Boat Club, near the finish flag. Almost immediately after the arrival of the *John Harvard* at the Longwood Bridge, the Englishmen, who had pulled up from the end of the Basin in their shell for the purpose of a little preliminary exercise, came upon the scene. They were a husky, sturdily built lot of young fellows, and as they rowed easily through the water it was quite evident that they were men of seasoned training, and that their manager was not altogether moved by the spirit of "bluff" when he had intimated, as he had done some days before, that the visitors would give a very excellent account of themselves.

The members of the Harvard crew

gazed from their shell at these antagonists with eager curiosity. If there was any weak-hearted among them he might well have experienced a sinking of his hopes as he observed the apparent confidence and machine-like precision with which the fragile shell was propelled through the water to the starting-point. Truth to tell, however, there was quite as much apprehension among the foreigners—"Beefeaters" as they had been familiarly dubbed by the student body—as there was among their antagonists. This was the most trying part of the ordeal for both crews—the few moments just prior to the actual beginning of hostilities, when they had no opportunity to allay their nervousness by actual physical effort, but were obliged to place themselves, as it were, on exhibition, the one before the other. It is so with all college athletic contests. A football team, for example, is never so much tortured with anxiety and gloomy foreboding as when it comes on to the field and indulges in a preliminary passing about of the pigskin

—a form of exercise apparently resorted to for the purpose of "warming up," but, as the coaches well know, in reality with the object of keeping the men in action and of preventing them as far as possible from becoming "rattled."

No one recognized this circumstance more thoroughly than Mr. Bud Hall, coach. After "sizing up" critically the English eight as they pulled with a leisurely and graceful stroke toward the starting flag, he picked up a megaphone, and proceeded to yell out to his charges in a tone that bore well within the enemy's lines:

"You 've got a cinch, boys! They 're putting up an elegant bluff. Don't let 'em scare you by any parlor tricks like this. It 's all very well to take pleasure spins when you have n't got another crew behind pulling like the devil to get the lead. They 're — they 're — lobsters!" And then in a subdued voice to Tom: "Don't forget what I told Thorne, Kid, about holding yourself in hand until you get below Harvard Bridge. These fel-

lows are no good! Do you hear? No good! You 've got a cinch, Kid—a cinch!"

The intent of Mr. Hall's remarks was admirable, and, in fact, his address did serve somewhat to restore whatever waning confidence the Harvard crew might have felt. It was Tom himself, however, who boldly came to the front with a remark that utterly routed any misgivings as to the outcome.

"I sa—ay, Bud," he replied, in his characteristically dawdling tone, "those chaps look awfully pretty in dress parade, but we 've got the stuff to make them look like two-spots when it comes to a showdown."

Simple words they were, and yet they served to cheer the crew immensely. The men felt at once that, whatever Tom's shortcomings as a stroke from a physical point of view might be, his spirit, and courage—his nerve—were undaunted. There was a palpable lessening of the tension after he had relieved himself of his brief but significant harangue.

In the meantime the *Veritas,* having come up rapidly in the wake of the other launch, ran alongside, and picking up the subs and manager, and a few others whose usefulness in a regatta is largely a matter of conjecture, started on ahead at full speed for the end of the Basin.

Down at the Union Boat Club, which faces directly up the river so that the spectator can gain an excellent "foreshortened" view of the race, so to speak, a gay throng had assembled. The balcony of the club-house was massed with invited guests—friends and relatives of the crew, adherents of the Englishmen, numbers of favored undergraduates who had been fortunate enough to gain cards of admission. It is needless to say that among the throng were Mrs. Ames and Evelyn and Edith. The men on the balcony were gorgeously arrayed in every conceivable style of outlandish college costume, presenting a variety of coloring that easily surpassed the comparatively modest frocks of the women. Among them were crowds of "old grads," dis-

tinguished as to their club or society affiliations by the hues of their hat-bands,—the Porcellian green and white, the "A. D.," a mixture of hues difficult to name, the "Owl," the "Spee," the "Fly," the "Digamma," the "Gas-House," and numbers of others. Many who were unable to find room on the balcony were gathered on the lower floor in the shell rooms and the gymnasium, or on the float. These were largely of the "unattached" sort—those who, in college lingo, were not "fussers," and were made up mostly of the sporting contingent, who were still busy "laying odds,"— or rather attempting to do so, as the number of English sympathizers had shrunk to remarkably small proportions. The news of Thorne's defection had not yet reached the Boat Club, though it was being borne down rapidly on the launch *Veritas,* through the medium of Mr. Tubby Anderson, who was fairly bursting with the dread import of his tidings.

Mrs. Ames, Wilton, and the two girls occupied a point of vantage in a corner

well to the front of the balcony, where they could get a fine view of the basin up as far as Harvard Bridge. Beyond this bridge no glimpse of the crews was to be seen, and it was not until the boats had passed under the arches of Harvard Bridge that the eye was able to detect such a slight, slender thing as a shell on the water—the nine men being strung out almost straight in the line of vision. For this reason the Charles is not an ideal sheet of water for a boat race as far as the spectators are concerned, especially if they are stationed at the finish,—lacking that very desirable feature present at the Thames where the crowds can accompany the flying crews on moving grandstands along the railroad track that skirts the banks. This defect, however, is largely made up for by a circumstance peculiar to the place. The left, or Boston shore of the river, looking up from the end of the Basin, ranges behind long rows of red brick buildings—an extension of Beacon Street reaching out into the traditionally aristocratic region of the Back Bay.

These buildings are separated from the "sea wall" by a monotonous succession of prim, rectangular, board-befenced back yards, and on the verge of the sea wall is a wide cinder road protected from the water by a strong iron railing. During every important regatta this railing for a distance of a mile or more, is fringed by a crowd of interested spectators, and, by a system of unconscious wireless telegraphy, consisting of indiscriminate howls and shrieks and roars from the populace, and by more or less concerted cheering from the students, some stray intimation of affairs is conveyed to the watchers at the end of the Basin as soon as the crews dart into sight from under the arches of Harvard Bridge.

It was nearly three o'clock, the time for the race to begin, when the *Veritas,* containing Tubby, Colton, and the others hove into view and made for the Union Boat Club landing. The crowd stared at the launch curiously, for it was not the custom for the *Veritas* to come down to the finish line before the race.

"Why, it's Tubby," cried Edith, as soon as the launch had made fast, and that corpulent individual, fairly bursting with the import of his tidings, tumbled precipitately on to the float.

"Hello, Tubby," she cried, waving her handkerchief, and smiling down at him sweetly, "how did you leave the boys?"

Tubby, catching sight of his friends, made no immediate response, but, working his way desperately through the throng on the float and on the lower floor, eventually arrived on the balcony, breathless with excitement, his chubby countenance the very type of abandoned grief and woe.

"Oh, gee," he gasped, when at last he had emerged through the crowd that surrounded the women, "my bets—my bets!"

For a moment he was unable to proceed, but could only lean feebly up against the railing for support.

Evelyn glanced at him in surprise, while Wilton bit his lip, to hide his confusion.

"Your bets," she repeated, anxiously, "why—what do you mean, Tubby?"

By this time a number of others on the

balcony, observing from Tubby's unusual manner that something was amiss, began to cluster about the little knot in the corner.

Tubby gazed at them mournfully, helplessly, and then cast his thunderbolt, after the manner of a very clumsy Jove.

"Oh, gee," he wailed, "*Thorne is n't going to row!*"

A cry of astonishment rose from the crowd, and there was a moment of intense silence during which Tubby continued to stare from one to the other of his friends, the embodiment of corpulent despair.

"Thorne is n't going to row?" repeated one of the men, "why—what is the matter?"

"Oh, I don't know," moaned Tubby, "only that he 's—he 's crazy; got a note or something and rushed out of the boat-house as if he had suddenly gone daffy. Gee whiz—my bets! I was banking on him. It 's a shame—a fake. The race ought to be called off!"

"Who is going to take his place at stroke?" asked another.

"Oh, that's the worst of it," cried Tubby. "Bud Hall has put in Tom Brown, and you all know he's no way equal to Thorne. He's not in Thorne's class. And here I've put up every cent I could scrape together, some at two to one. It isn't fair I say. It's robbery!"

A murmur of surprise quivered about among those on the balcony and, with a rapidity usual under such circumstances, the sad tidings were conveyed downstairs, where the sporting element were still endeavoring to get their money on Harvard at two to one.

Evelyn, a bright red spot burning in either cheek, shook Tubby violently by the arm.

"What do you mean," she exclaimed, with delightfully inconsistent loyalty, "by saying that Tom is not in Thorne's class? You know it is n't so. Tom rows just—just beautifully!" And, her eyes burning with excitement, she continued: "He's every bit as good as Mr. Thorne. I'm sure Harvard will win. Shame on you, Mr. Anderson! What right have

you to carry on so about your silly little bets? Oh, if I were only a man! I—I would just double my bets on the crew!"

Tubby looked up at her curiously.

"Why," he exclaimed, in genuine astonishment, "I thought you were n't friends with Tom."

"That has n't anything to do with it," retorted Evelyn, flushing beautifully. "I know Tom can row splendidly, and—and—he *must* win," she cried, somewhat irrelevantly, fairly carried away by excitement, and shedding in an instant all the resentment she had felt on account of the unfortunate derelictions of her sweetheart, "he must win, he—he—oh, dear," she cried, turning abruptly toward Mrs. Ames, "don't you think he will win, mother?"

Mrs. Ames smiled sweetly on her daughter, albeit there was a certain tincture of agitation even in her own usually self-composed manner. Before she could reply, however, Tubby once more intervened.

"It 's all very well for you to talk like

that," he said with a most woe-begone expression, "but you have n't followed racing the way I have. You have n't gone down in your jeans—er—I mean, you have n't put up all your coin for the next year on the strength of that fellow Thorne stroking the crew. Oh, the—the lobster! If I only had him here, I 'd—I 'd ——"

Whatever awful vengeance Tubby would have wreaked on the unfortunate person of the recalcitrant stroke oar was never made known to the world, for his voice was lost in a sudden, tumultuous, hilarious uproar from the left bank of the river.

"There they come! There they come!" cried Edith, clapping her hands in a truly feminine exhibition of excitement, not having the slightest suspicion as to which crew, if either, was ahead.

In an instant every eye was fixed intently on Harvard Bridge, which, though a mile distant, was sharply outlined in the clear air of the spring afternoon.

Nothing as yet was to be seen saving some stray gasoline launches which,

despite the most earnest efforts of those who were patrolling the river, persisted in making themselves obnoxious by skimming along the edge of the course, as almost invariably happens no matter how important an event is to be decided. Otherwise the broad stretch of water extending from the finish line near the Union Boat Club up to the bridge appeared as unruffled and devoid of excitement as mid-sea during a perfect calm. Evelyn, whose interest in the race had, strange to say, manifoldly increased since Tubby's disastrous revelation, swept the vista of water before her with a pair of field glasses (a gift, by the way, from one Tom Brown, to be used for this particular occasion), but, though everything in the line of sight was duly magnified, she could detect no sign of either crew.

The crowd on the bank up the river, however, seemed to be better informed. From them came a continual succession of yells, and howls, and cheers,—though whether they were cheers of exultation or

cheers of encouragement it was quite impossible to tell.

"Oh, Evie," exclaimed Edith, who manifestly greatly overestimated the magnifying power of even such an excellent pair of glasses as Evelyn possessed, "can you see Clax—I mean them? Who's ahead?"

Tubby dropped into a chair, and, seizing great mops of his hair in either hand, moaned dolefully:

"Don't look any longer, Evie—that is —Miss Ames. It's all off. Oh, gee whiz, my bets—and I have n't even got meal tickets for the rest of the year."

The shouting on the banks continued to grow louder and louder. Those in the balcony could see the people on the shore excitedly prancing up and down, waving their arms, leaning over the iron railing, and occasionally running to and fro actuated and inspired by no visible cause or pretext whatsoever.

Even Mrs. Ames, gentle, refined, and quiet creature that she was, began to be

infected by the spirit of the occasion. Turning to her daughter, who still continued to stare through the glasses up the river, she asked, affecting a calmness which she did not altogether feel:

"Do you see them yet, Evie? Who is leading?"

At this moment, even to the unaided eyes of those standing on the balcony, two slim, elusive dots appeared, almost as if by magic, on the river below Harvard Bridge, evidently having passed under different arches. There was nothing to indicate that they were two racing shells, impelled by sixteen brawny young men whose very souls were wrought up in the effort of achieving victory, except that now and then the flash of oars shimmered momentarily in the bright sunlight, and as abruptly vanished.

Steadily, but slowly as it seemed to the watchers on the balcony of the boat-house, the crews approached. From mere dots on the water they gradually began to assume definite shapes, though even then it was impossible to distinguish the men

in the shells; a not remarkable circumstance considering that all the members of the two crews wore monotonously similar "gym" shirts, that they were bareheaded, bare-armed, and that there was nothing about the boats themselves that served to identify them even at close range.

In the meantime the crowds on the bank became more and more excited and vociferous. It seemed as if the iron railing on which most of these riparian spectators were leaning had become charged with an electric current, causing them to dance about like so many jiggling marionettes.

Evelyn, with half-opened mouth, her breath coming in quick little gasps, continued to gaze at the approaching crews with absorbed interest.

"Oh, Evie," pleaded Edith, "*who* is ahead? It 's the English crew. I know it is. Oh, I know it," she added dismally.

Here Tubby, with a groan, sank further into his chair and buried his face in his hands.

"Oh—the—the—mucker!" he wailed. "If I had only known—if I had only known!"

"You hush up," cried Evelyn sharply, lowering her glasses for a moment and looking down at Tubby's abject figure with unspeakable scorn. "You 've no right to talk so. Harvard *must* win. Tom rows just beautifully. It 's—it 's mean of you to talk so!"

"The English crew is ahead!" cried Edith. "Oh, they are getting ahead. They are winning."

"It is n't so!" retorted Evelyn, once more levelling her glasses on the rival contestants. "It is n't so at all. Oh, yes, it is," she added despairingly, though it would have puzzled a more experienced eye than hers to distinguish one crew from the other at the distance. "They 're gaining! Oh, why do they go so fast? I —I—oh, I did n't know a race was so short. Just think—less than two miles; not enough to give our boys a chance. It is n't fair.

"O dear, they 're more than half way,

and the Englishmen are still gaining—half a length ahead!" And then, turning to Tubby, she implored:

"Oh, Tubby—Mr. Anderson—don't you think our men are gaining—just a little bit? Oh, they must, they must! No! The others are creeping ahead. Oh, if I could only help!"

But poor Tubby was beyond affording solace, even at this pathetic appeal. He sat miserably in his chair, though all the others were standing, and gazed forlornly out on the momentous drama that was being enacted before his eyes, crushed, overwhelmed by his sorry fate, wholly convinced that all hope was lost.

The crews had now covered fully half the course between Harvard Bridge and the finish flags—being about half a mile distant. So near were they that the outlines of the men could be fairly distinguished, and the desperate energy of their efforts could be gauged by the sudden glimmering flash and disappearance of the oar blades.

Both crews were rowing at a fast clip,

as is likely to be the case over a short course, and from time to time each side spurted in response to the violent, raucous entreaty of their respective coxswains.

On and on they came, past the crowd on the open-air balcony of the University Club, past the squat, fussy, impudent gasoline launches that had gathered near the Boston bank to be " in at the finish "; past the rows of frenzied spectators who lined the fence-rail back of the sea wall,— silently, desperately, fiercely onward.

They were near enough now to enable those with glasses to distinguish them absolutely, one from the other. After having passed the University Club it was plainly seen that the English crew was the one well in toward the Cambridge shore, where the water was comparatively smooth, though this manœuvre involved a slight detour, while the Harvard crew held to the middle of the river, being hampered more or less by the roughness of the water caused by the police patrol and pleasure launches, which exasperated the spectators by constantly verging on the

course. Each crew was rowing about thirty-six strokes to the minute. As the shells were urged gracefully onward, the men bending to their work with the regularity of machines, it seemed as if the crews and their boats constituted strange species of huge water spiders, actuated by some common principle, bent on accomplishing some common object.

"Oh," cried Evelyn suddenly, as she continued to gaze earnestly through the glasses, "I can see Tom! Oh, Tom, Tom, row, row, row! Oh, Tom, you 're a de——"

Here Mrs. Ames, in her motherly manner, placed her hand soothingly on the arm of her palpitating daughter.

"Hush, Evie," she whispered warningly, "remember you are not alone."

But Evelyn was fairly quivering with excitement. The race had now, as far as she was concerned, been reduced to a matter of Tom Brown. Poor Harvard, for her at least, was lost in the tumult of her anxiety that her dear, devoted Tom should prove a hero.

"He 's going faster!" she cried, "he—oh!"

At this psychological moment a tremendous cheer arose from the crowd on the bank. Hats and caps were tossed wildly into the air, and there was a sudden frenzied scramble down the wide cinder road along the shore toward the lower end of the Basin.

"They 're closing up the gap," almost shrieked Evelyn in a paroxysm of joy, abandoning her now useless field glasses. "They 're creeping up. Tom is creeping up. I can see the coxswain yelling to them through the megaphone. Oh, pull like—like—everything, Tom! Faster! Faster! Oh, I wish he could hear me! He 's got to win—he 's got to win. Look, mamma, they 're almost even!"

Aye, it was even as she had said. The two crews were critically near the finish line and Harvard, rowing with a steady, rapid stroke, had gradually but surely nibbled off the advantage that had been gained by the Englishmen at the start so that they were now on about even terms.

"Oh, Tom, you de——," exclaimed Evelyn almost involuntarily, when she was again repressed by her mother.

"Oh, anyhow," she cried, "the Englishmen are beaten! They 're beaten! They 're tired out, and Tom—Harvard is n't. Our boys are going faster every minute. Oh, such a little way! Pull, Tom!" she cried, leaning far over the railing of the balcony despite her mother's expostulations and restraining arm, "Pull—pull, Tom! Oh, they 're ahead!" she shouted, jumping up and down and clapping her hands. "Tom's ahead. Oh, Tom Brown, you 're winning—you 're winning! Oh, Tom!" she gasped with one final effort, as the Harvard crew, still fresh and collected, shot over the winning line, a full length ahead of its competitors, "you 've *WON!*"

It is a sad thing from a literary point of view to be obliged to announce that "pandemonium reigned." That is a fearfully overworked expression. Yet it describes exactly the situation in the Union Boat Club after the Harvard crew had

snatched itself so gloriously from defeat to victory. The men—even the elderly, gray-haired "grads"—after having embraced their nearest neighbors without discrimination, and almost wept for very joy, began to shout and sing, and prance about the place like mad,—upsetting camp chairs, "wickers," tables, crashing to atoms the glasses in which "claret cup" and other innocuous beverages had been served, and then rushed, with a whirlwind of triumph, down the stairs to the float to receive the victorious crew.

In an instant, after the shell had been pulled over to the Boat Club landing—as is customary after regattas on the river when rowed down stream—the coxswain found his occupation gone. If he had counted upon making a stunning impression by bringing his shell in an orderly fashion up to the float, commanding the crew to unship oars, and go through the routine prescribed for such occasions, he had reckoned without the demoniacal gang that awaited his arrival.

For no sooner were the crew within

grabbing distance than they were unceremoniously yanked out by their enthusiastic and boisterous admirers, and toted aloft in triumph. The beaming, heavenly happy person of Tom Brown, owing to his situation in the boat, was the last to come in for their delicate attentions, but, judging from the energy with which he was received, there was no doubt whatever as to his status. He was the hero—the man who had stepped into the breach and, despite the heavy handicap imposed by the unexpected defection of Thorne,—the idol who had saved the day. A dozen hands seized him by his arms, his neck, his head, his "gym" shirt—by any available purchase, and in an instant he was raised on high on the shoulders of as many of his delirious admirers as could conveniently place themselves under him, and borne up the gang-plank toward the boat-house. Hot, sweating, panting with excitement and with the exertion of the race, he was yet the very incarnation of joy, and for once he neglected to drawl out his protesting, "I sa—ay." But one thing

was lacking to fill to overflowing his intoxicating cup of happiness, and that want was not long in being supplied. For, as he was carried aloft on the shoulders of his tumultuous adorers toward the entrance of the boat-house, he chanced to glance up at the balcony, and there he saw the idol of his heart,—Evelyn, beaming down upon him, her eyes drowned in tears of pride and delight; smiling upon him with a smile that assured him that all his previous shortcomings—assuming, of course, they had been such—had been miraculously forgiven. And as he was hustled and jammed through the doorway, she snatched a bunch of violets from her waist and, leaning far over the balcony, tossed them into his eager, outstretched hand, even while his captors, in the wild abandon of their frenzy, resorted to the old familiar refrain, which, being taken up by the crowd, was rendered with a vigor and sincerity which it had never known before:

"Tom Brown's body is alive and feeling good,

She snatched a bunch of violets from her waist and tossed them into his eager, outstretched hand.

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Tom Brown's body, here 's a fact that 's
understood,
Tom Brown's body 's got a head that 's made
of wood,
As we go marching on!"

But alas for Tom, and alas for Evelyn! He had been seated scarcely five minutes in the secluded nook of the balcony, among his friends, clad once more in his sweater for propriety's sake, and explaining, between gasps, how the whole thing had happened, when there was a rush of steps up the staircase, and Thorne, wild-eyed, grief-stricken, hatless, in a fever of excitement, darted recklessly into the midst of the party and seized the hero by the wrist in a tremendous grip, while the others became suddenly silent, and looked upon the intruder in amazement.

"Yes!" cried Thorne passionately, in a highly melodramatic fashion, "hail him as a hero! Pet him, cheer him, coddle him—but I tell you, he is a scoundrel and a—thief!"

The silence became, if possible, even more tense, while Tom looked up at his

accuser fairly dazed with astonishment.

"He is a thief and a scoundrel, I say," cried Thorne, his voice hoarse with emotion,—"for he has stolen—my sister!"

Tom stared about him as if searching for some clue to this wholly unexpected riddle. So dumbfounded was he that he had no thought for any feeling of resentment, no words for hot denial. Mrs. Ames was the first to speak.

"Oh, Tom, dear—what does he mean? Deny this absurd charge."

There was another moment of awkward, solemn silence, and then Tom once more received the blessed gift of speech.

"Oh—I sa—ay," he ejaculated, like one in a dream, "what the deuce do you mean, Thorne? Of course I deny it. The man must be mad!"

"Mad, am I?" shouted Thorne, his brilliant black eyes blazing with wrath, as he snatched a bit of paper from his pocket and held it fluttering out toward the little group. "Can he deny this check?

"He sends my sister money! My

poor child," he added, his voice trembling pitiably. "She was just about to leave town when I found her, and was trying to cash this check. Oh, God!" he cried in a tone of such anguish that even Tom's sympathizers could not fail to be touched. And then abruptly resorting to his threatening manner, he exclaimed, "The check, —you gave my sister money and she was about to leave town. Explain this check, you miserable, purse-proud snob!"

Still Tom was unable to return a word of protest. Taking the slip of paper from Thorne's hand he gazed at it in a trance.

"My check!" he muttered, "for three hundred dollars!"

"Ah, you see," cried Thorne, turning around upon the others, "he cannot deny it. His check, for three hundred dollars, given to my sister, so that she might leave town!" And then, wheeling about upon the woful figure of the totally perplexed Tom, he continued, more deliberately:

"I must have an explanation from you, sir. I must have an understanding. This is no time or place," he added, glancing

about upon the women, "but you must explain this thing to me, before you are a day older, do you hear? I demand an explanation."

Turning upon his heel he darted toward the doorway, and his steps could be heard as he tore rapidly down the staircase, while Tom and his friends looked after him as if he had been some unpleasant creature from another world. Again it was Mrs. Ames who spoke.

"Tom," she said,—and her manner had assumed an unaccustomed tincture of distance and formality, "Tom, what have you to say?"

Tom gazed long and earnestly at the fateful bit of paper in his hands, and then cast his glance about among his friends. As he did so he caught sight of Wilton Ames's despairing face appearing anxiously over his mother's shoulder. He started with a sudden comprehension, and was about to speak, but Ames made, unseen by the others, a gesture eloquent with mute appeal. Tom looked from mother to son, and slyly at Evelyn, and—then

dropped his head, abject, forlorn, apparently convicted of all that Thorne had accused him.

"What have I to say?" he repeated, as he gazed once more with a fascinated glance at the check,—"why—nothing!"

CHAPTER XVIII

AN ALL-NIGHT SESSION

THERE was a dinner that night, after the race, to the victorious Harvard crew, to their unsuccessful though undaunted rivals, and to a number of devoted adherents of both sides, at the Union training table, and when the dinner was over Tom and Madden returned to their rooms, accompanied by Happy Thurston, Tubby, Bernard, Jean, and Van Rensselaer. The men, as they passed through the Yard and along the beautiful elm-lined streets, were unusually quiet and restrained. The spirit of elation and hilarity which might very naturally have been expected to betray itself under the circumstances was wholly absent. Very deliberately, on arriving at Madden's and Tom's study,

the men disposed themselves in lounging attitudes, all, except those who were in training, devoting themselves to their pipes in an unusual, gloomy, almost embarrassed silence,—a silence so marked and persistent that the place seemed strangely to take on the hushed aspect of a cloistered retreat. From time to time, down on the street arose, at first faintly, and then swelling in volume, and finally dying away in the soft distance of the night the cheers and shouts and songs of various belated revellers returning to their rooms after a season devoted to loyal and industrious celebration. Now and again one or the other of the men from sheer exhaustion fell asleep where he sat or sprawled, as the case might be,—especially Tubby, who at once sought the favored window-seat, and there at once abandoned himself to sweet repose, snoring tumultuously on his back with mouth wide open, occasionally gasping and gurgling and snorting from the very profundity of his slumbers.

Tom alone, of all the crowd, kept

awake, sitting uneasily in his chair before the desk, or now and then rising nervously and pacing the floor, looking about on his friends with a glance of baffled apprehension, quite at variance with the customary jollity and whole-souled good-fellowship of his manner. He knew that as a member of the crew he ought to have turned in long ago, yet he was still dazed, overwhelmed by the miserable revelation that had occurred so dramatically, so unexpectedly, so disastrously on the balcony of the Boat Club immediately after the race. He could not get from before his mind's eye the frenzied, grief-stricken figure of the unfortunate stroke-oar, the bitterness with which Thorne had denounced him, the forlorn, beseeching, mute appeal of Wilton Ames, his sweetheart's brother, the shocked, horrified expression on Evelyn's face, the heart-breaking knowledge that this same Wilton had, for some unaccountable reason, forged his name to a check. And above all there was present in his mind the conviction that now, as on a former occasion, no matter what might

happen, he was bound by every sense of duty to protect him from discovery and disgrace, even at the possible sacrifice of the confidence and affection of these his dearest friends.

It had all happened so swiftly, so unexpectedly—so cruelly! He had been so proud, so exultant, so happy—so supremely happy; only to have his cup of happiness dashed rudely to earth, and to be made an object of hatred by Thorne, and, well, perhaps of suspicion by the others. Not for a moment did he feel a particle of resentment toward Thorne. Rather he sympathized with him in his tremendous rage. Nor did the unselfishness, the inherent optimism, the nobility of his character permit him to regard Ames with any other than a sense of genuine sorrow and pity.

But—well, if things only could have been different! If this whole wretched business had never occurred! The very fact that his friends still believed in him, despite the ominous gloom that had settled over their spirits like a pall, oppressed

him, convinced him that in justice to them, in fairness to himself, he owed them an explanation that he could not give.

The room was dimly lighted by the shaded lamp on the table, casting a feeble glow on the heavy film of smoke that had settled into a well-defined layer. After one of his restless pacings up and down, he once more seated himself dejectedly at the desk, and seized the bunch of violets that Evelyn had bestowed upon him only a few short hours before. As he did so, the little vase in which they had been placed toppled over and fell to the floor with a crash. The sharp, brittle sound of breaking glass served to arouse his companions from their lethargy,—even Tubby coming to with a final, abrupt snort, and staring about him in fat bewilderment.

Madden, who had been seated opposite Tom with his head bowed on his arms as they lay folded on the desk, suddenly rose, walked over to the fireplace, and, leaning his massive shoulders against the mantel, coughed in a manner that was calculated to lend him assurance, but which

served only to call the attention of the others to his embarrassment, and proceeded to make one of the longest, most coherent addresses of his career.

"Kid," he began solemnly, glancing from time to time about the room on the anxious faces of his friends for support and sympathy, "Kid, I have n't been asleep all this time. I 've been thinking."

Under ordinary circumstances this remark would have afforded the irrepressible Tubby opportunity for a facetious gibe, but for once he remained preternaturally silent, and listened with respectful attention.

"I 've been thinking," continued Madden seriously, "and I know that what I 've said to myself is just what the other fellows are thinking, too. And Kid, old man, darn it all, I 'm going to speak right out. Old chap," he said, with a world of genuine affection in his voice, usually so bantering and good-natured, "*I don't think, and we all don't think, you are being quite frank with us.* We know you

have n't done anything wrong, but, hang it all, this is an ugly proposition you 're up against, and I don't think it 's right for you to keep anything back. Of course, it may seem none of our business; but, Kid," and here his voice trembled slightly, "we 've always been square and above board with each other, and—but—well, it seems you owe it not only to yourself, but to your friends, to clear the atmosphere. Why, this confounded business has given us all a set-back—it 's made us all feel—rotten. It has even taken away the pleasure of our win on the river to-day. Somehow, darn it all, I don't feel glad a little bit." And then, walking over to where Tom sat moodily at the desk, he placed his hand on his chum's arm, as a father might do to a beloved child, and added in a voice thick with the earnestness of his emotion, "Oh, Tom,—it was a regular knock-out!"

The others in the room were now wide-awake, and looked at Madden approvingly, as if he had expressed, no matter how awkwardly, the sentiments common

to them all. Tom, however, remained seated in an attitude of despair, crushing the violets in his hand.

There were a few moments of absolute silence, broken only by the twittering of the birds outside, which had already begun to feel the approach of early dawn, when Tubby, in an aggrieved tone, came to the rescue, and relieved the situation somewhat of its embarrassment.

"Kid," he said, in an injured tone, "it 's taken my appetite away—that 's what it 's done. That was a bully good dinner to-night at the Union, and" he added forlornly, "and I could n't enjoy it."

Instead of regarding Tubby's remarks in a cheerful vein, as was the custom, his friends apparently paid them no attention at all. Most of the smokers had renewed their pipes and sat regarding Madden and Tom attentively with a serious eye. The stillness became almost unbearable, and in order to relieve the strain, Jean, who sat over on the piano stool reclining at a perilous angle against the keys, turned and struck a few soft chords.

The music, however, seemed totally out of place, and, at once recognizing this circumstance, he immediately gave over this artificial effort at injecting a little cheer into the situation, and wheeled apologetically around upon his stool as if he had committed some grave offence. And, indeed, it seemed that he had, for the others frowned upon him horribly.

"There is no use of my arguing with you, Tom," continued Madden. "We might have argued with you hours to-night, and yet get no farther than when we first started. We all feel," he added, as he made his way back to the friendly mantel-piece, looking about once more upon the others for support,—"we all feel that—confound it, we all feel that you ought to speak out."

Tom nervously rose from his seat, yearning to "speak out," as his chum had suggested, and yet convinced that it was the last thing he could do. He took two or three turns up and down the room, followed by the men's anxious glances, and then miserably resumed his place at the

desk while he looked around upon the others beseechingly.

"I *have* spoken, Clax," he replied at last, pleadingly. "I 've told you all fairly that I scarcely know this girl, Miss Thorne—no better than most of you do. Why, Clax, old fellow, I don't believe I 've spoken more than a dozen sentences to her in my life. I met her wholly by accident."

"I know, Kid," replied Madden, "we believe all that—we know all that; but there 's the check. Of course you can explain all about that, but—hang it all—why *don't* you explain about it? What the deuce do you want to keep so mum about it for? What 's the use in making us all feel so—so ——"

"Rotten!" supplied the chorus of Tom's friends, at the same time removing their pipes from their mouths and awaiting Tom's reply in an agony of expectation.

"Why don't you explain about the check, Kid?" persisted Madden, as Tom still hesitated to reply.

Tom gazed at his friends imploringly.

"Because," he said, after another moment of embarrassed silence, while the men sat at attention, expecting the final solution of a riddle that had been a sore trial to all of them, "because—I *can't.*"

There was a groan from the others, as they put their pipes back into their mouths and puffed away furiously, sending up great clouds of smoke. Madden turned his back to the room and leaned his elbows on the mantel in a posture of mute despair.

"Honest, Clax," continued Tom earnestly, "I can't explain about it, even to my own satisfaction. I can't explain about that check."

"Now, look here, Tom," spoke up Happy Thurston "You 're not acting right. I—I know you 've been a little sore at me because I used to cut in on you with *her,* but she, she never cared a hang for me. You were always the main guy there, and you know it. So it does n't seem right to me that you should let her look cheap that way before all the fellows —sort of playing fast and loose, as if you

did n't appreciate what a devil of a fine thing it was to be 'Number 1' with a girl like—well, I 'm not mentioning any names."

So much from Happy. The others listened to his frank address with manifest admiration, and then turned once more toward Tom, who had sunk down in his chair until his head rested on the back, looking, if possible, more hopelessly dejected than ever. To Thurston's appeal he remained silent.

"And then too," observed Tubby earnestly, coming gracefully to the aid of his friends with his usual tact, "how about that day in your room, Kid? That April Fools' day when you worked off your beautiful gag on us? Gee, that was a corker! I 'm not asking what that girl was doing there—in your own room you know. That 's your own business, but it seems to me as if—well, as if you ought n't to deny that you must have known her pretty well."

A look of pain spread over Tom's face, and Madden wheeled sharply about from his station at the mantel.

"Tubby Anderson," he exclaimed indignantly, "you 're the confoundedest idiot that the Lord ever let loose. Now you just dry up. The Kid told us that everything was right about the girl and you know he does n't lie. There 's something in this business that we don't understand, I 'll admit, but that April Fools' day thing is not what 's worrying us. It 's the check." And then turning to Tom he added, almost pleadingly, "If you had lent that money to Miss Th—to the girl, Tom—you 'd tell, would n't you, old man? There would n't be any harm in that, now, would there?"

Tom abruptly drew himself up in his chair and glared at his tormentors in sudden desperation.

"Hang it all, Clax," he said impatiently, "we ought to have gone to bed hours ago. It 's a rank shame to sit up this way, and besides there 's no use going into that thing any more. I tell you, I *can't* explain. Don't you know what that means? I *can't* explain. I don't want to talk any more about it!" Whereupon

"I *can't* explain. I don't want to talk any more about it!"

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he jumped from his seat, and began for the twentieth time his nervous pacing up and down the room.

Madden followed him sadly for a moment with his eyes, and then slowly picked up the check from the table and gazed at it mournfully,—the fatal cause of all the solicitude of his friends and himself.

"It says 'to bearer,'" he sighed, "'Pay to bearer.'"

He felt the check, turned it over, held it up to the lamp, in the vain hope that in some mysterious way the secret would be revealed. But as no new light broke in upon him, he passed the slip on to Bernard. The latter went through the same fruitless pantomime, and the check was passed about among the men until finally it came into the possession of Thurston, who retained it, and studied it even more critically than the others had done.

"Did she strike you for a loan, Kid?" inquired Madden, still seeking for some loop-hole through which his chum could make his escape.

"No! No! Of course not," returned

Tom hotly. "I tell you I scarcely know the girl. The idea of her striking me for a loan—why it 's ridiculous!"

"Kid," said Jean seriously, for the first time taking an active part in the proceedings, though with a certain air of diffidence, "I was hoping I would n't have to say anything about this, but I want to force your hand. I saw you myself one night, a couple of weeks ago, in the yard, right outside my window talking to that girl, and her brother, Thorne, came along and kicked up an awful muss about some violets or something, and—well—it was none of my business, of course, and I 'd never have thought of it again if it had n't been for this that 's happened. You *did* give her something then, Kid,—now did n't you, old man?"

Again the men observed Tom keenly. It certainly seemed now that they were on a promising trail.

"Yes," replied Tom briefly, with a slight return of the familiar good-humored twinkle in his eyes.

"What was it, Kid?" continued Jean

eagerly. "Of course, it's none of my business, as I said, but—hang it—what was it?"

The men remained breathless, awaiting Tom's reply with absorbed interest.

"A bunch of violets," responded Tom simply.

There was a sigh of disappointment, almost of vexation, from his friends. They had begun to realize that the inquiry was hopeless. One by one they resumed their former places, and succumbing to the demands of exhausted nature, they once more faded away into the sweet oblivion of slumber. Even Tom, worn out by the physical exertion of the race, by the gruelling if kindly intended inquisition to which he had been subjected by his friends, by the extreme lateness of the hour, sank back into the arm-chair, and, resting his head on his breast, was soon lost in an innocent, peaceful, profound sleep. And thus they dozed on, while Tubby renewed his stertorous snoring on the window-seat, while the lamp continued to emit its murky smoke, while the remnant of night waned

and gave place to the approach of a gorgeous spring dawn, while the birds in the big tree on the sidewalk renewed their incessant, multitudinous chirping, while the world without awoke to the life and noise and activity of another day.

They slept—all except Mr. Happy Thurston. As for him, he appeared to be entranced by the slip of paper that he held in his hand. For a long time he scrutinized it without stirring, examining every feature of it—the printing, the date, the amount for which it called, the words that Madden had quoted, "Payable to bearer," and, with especial intentness, the signature.

The birds were very busy in the tree now; there was the occasional rattle of an unreasonably early cart or wagon on the street; the light of the rising sun crept around the edges of the drawn window-shade, and, partly illuminating the room, served to reduce the already feeble rays of the lamp to a weird, ghostly pallor.

At length Happy raised his head and

glanced about on his unconscious companions, studying each of them intently—craftily. Then he arose noiselessly, and made his way with cunning stealth over to the desk. Pulling out the upper drawer he rummaged about among the jumble of papers that it contained, and, selecting a few that apparently answered his purpose, seated himself in the chair formerly occupied by Tom, and, placing the check on the desk, began a minute, searching comparison between the signature and those on several scraps of paper that he had taken from the drawer.

For fully ten minutes he remained engrossed in this occupation, from time to time glancing furtively about upon his somnolent comrades, when suddenly there came a brisk rapping on the door. Tom, roused from his repose, opened his eyes and glanced about the room. Again there came the sound of knocking, this time louder than before. The other sleepers, excepting Tubby, who was entirely too far gone to be disturbed by any such

slight interruption as this, stirred uneasily in their places, and drowsily came back to earth when Tom called out:

"Come in!"

The door opened, and Wilton Ames, haggard and worn, stood on the threshold. Glancing about the room and observing the men stretched out in attitudes of more or less picturesque repose, and eying him with marked curiosity, he stammered:

"Oh—Kid, I—I thought you were alone."

"Come in," said Tom endeavoring without success to adopt his customary hearty manner, "glad to see you. What on earth are you doing up this time of night?"

Ames closed the door hesitatingly behind him, and shuffled awkwardly into the room, still glancing furtively about.

"You look fagged," observed Tom dryly. "Have a drink?"

"I 've been up all night too," said Ames feebly. "I—I could n't sleep."

"I 've given all my friends a bad night, it seems," said Tom in a tone which,

strangely enough for him, was fraught with a very obvious quality of irony.

He stepped over to the little buffet in the corner and taking down a glass poured into it a stiff drink of whiskey, diluting it with a squirt of seltzer from a siphon on the table.

"Come," he said with an effort of good cheer, handing the glass to Ames, who had sunk despondently on the window-seat in a small space left vacant by the still snoring Tubby, "brace up. You 've nothing to—er—you should n't feel so cut up, old man. Come, take a drink, and be cheerful!"

Ames took the proffered glass, and held it is his hand without attempting to taste its contents,—looking all the while covertly, suspiciously, about the room.

Tom stepped over to the window and with a dexterous twitch sent the blind up with a snap. Instantaneously a gleam of sunshine flooded the apartment with the glorious red of the awakening day.

The sudden influx of brilliant light, compared with the dull glow of the jaded

lamp, had a fairly dazzling effect, and served to rouse even the snoring Tubby to a state of consciousness.

"Why!" he exclaimed, sitting up in his place and rubbing his round eyes in amazement, "it 's—it 's morning! Gee! We 've sat up all night!" And then, looking about upon the others, not noticing the presence of the new arrival, he added, as if moved by a sudden, happy inspiration:

"Say, let's all go down to Rammy's, and get a hot dog!"

But here a most untoward incident occurred. For Thurston, his eyes still glued on the paper before him, suddenly sprang from his seat, and shouted, in a tone of triumph:

"I 've got it! I 've got it!"

"Got what?" inquired Madden.

"I 've got it; oh, I 've got it!" rushed on Happy precipitately. "The check—Tom's check for three hundred dollars,—it 's a *forgery!*"

Ames's glass, with its untasted contents, fell to the floor with a crash. His hand

trembled violently, and his face became ghastly pale.

Tom stepped up to him and placed his hand on his shoulder as if to steady him, at the same time remarking:

"You need n't yell so all-fired loud, Happy. There 's no use going up in the air about this thing."

But the others paid him no attention. They were staring in astonishment, while the sinister import of Thurston's words filtered through their torpid intellects.

"Why, Happy," exclaimed Madden at last, when once the full force of the situation had dawned upon him, and gazing wonderingly to where Ames sat, "are you sure—how do you know?"

"Know?" repeated Thurston with the exultant triumph of one who has solved an apparently hopeless riddle, "know? Why, because I 've been working at this thing in a common-sense way, while you lobsters have been snoozing. Just look here," he said, "and compare this signature on the check with Tom's signature on these theme papers."

The men began to crowd about Thurston, eager for a confirmation of his discovery, when Tom sprang forward from Ames's side and snatched the check from Thurston's grasp.

"Now look here, you fellows," he cried, "just drop this right here. Why on earth can't you let this check alone? It 's none of your affair, anyhow, and—and you 're all a darned lot of busy-bodies, butting in where you 've no right to!"

"I know, Kid," returned Madden quietly, "but, Tom, if it *is* a forgery, why, you know, that lets you out—and we 'll —we 'll all feel so much better ——"

Before Madden could finish there came a loud rap on the door, which was immediately thrown open violently, and Cartright, bespectacled and shrimp-like as of yore, burst precipitately into the room.

"For God's sake, Brown," he cried, his large, near-sighted eyes almost popping from their sockets with excitement, "you 've got to get away from here—quick! I 've done all I could. I 've spent the whole night with him, arguing and

persuading, but he 's wild and won't listen to reason. Thorne—hang it," he added, his excitement increased by Tom's imperturbed, almost serene aspect, "Thorne, do you hear? That crazy grind from the South! He 's coming here with a gun and—oh, confound it all,—don't you understand?—he means murder!"

There was a pause while the others in the room gazed from Cartright to Tom in helpless dismay.

"I tell you the fellow 's crazed—wild!" —rushed on Cartright, now thoroughly exasperated as well as excited, "do you know what I mean? He 'll shoot on sight. Don't—*don't* stand there like—like a frozen Indian!"

A smile, almost of sweet content, spread over Tom's features, for somehow, even though the peril might be, as Cartright had said, imminent and grave, he felt a strange sense of relief, and with a return to his accustomed drawl, he asked:

"Well, what do you expect me to do, old man? Run up the chimney?"

CHAPTER XIX

THE WORM TURNS

HARDLY had Tom finished speaking when there was the trampling of rapid steps on the staircase and in the hall, and Thorne, the unfortunate, more desperate, wilder, more frenzied than ever, stood in the doorway. He stopped for a moment, apparently surprised by the gathering of students in the room, but catching sight of Tom, who still remained in a wholly unconcerned attitude by the desk, he rushed toward him with an oath.

Claxton, however, sprang forward and interposed his bulky form between the maddened Southerner and his complacent prey.

"Look here, Thorne," he cried, "what the devil do you mean by coming in here like this? Just cut this out, will you?

We 've had enough of this stage villain business for one day."

"Cut it out, eh?" sneered Thorne, "not until I 've had an understanding with that scoundrel. There are no women here now, and we 'll have this thing settled once for all!"

Here Tom, who still appeared to be the most collected man in the room, stepped forward, and placing his hand on his chum's shoulder, pushed him gently aside.

"You stand back, Clax. This is my row, and I guess I can take care of myself." Then, turning to Thorne, he continued:

"Thorne, you 're rattled;—you believe that I have in some way mortally offended you;—you 've come around here to give me hell;—there has even been some talk about your having a gun so that you can do me up in real, first-class Southern style. But before you go a step farther in this matter, knowing that you might, if you wished, shoot me dead in a moment, I swear to you by all that 's holy that I 'm not guilty of what you have accused me."

"The money," cried Thorne passionately, "why did you give my sister money?"

Tom looked the crazed stroke-oar steadily in the eye, and, speaking deliberately, impressively, replied:

"*I gave your sister no money!*"

"Ah—but you gave her a check! You dare quibble with me? You 're a liar and a scoundrel, and I 'm going to treat you as we treat men of your stamp down in my country."

He made a movement with his clinched fist toward his pocket, but Madden again jumped forward and caught him by the wrist, while Cartright darted to his side and placed a trembling hand on his shoulder.

"Stop, Thorne! For heaven's sake stop! This—this is the man *whose money is helping you through college!*"

The words struck Thorne like a blow. It seemed as if he had suddenly become paralyzed. He stared at Cartright in dumb amazement, unable to believe the evidence of his senses. From Cartright

he slowly transferred his gaze to Tom, whose face had suddenly flushed a furious red. There was a moment of intense silence, the men forming a dramatic group in the centre of the room, with the exception of Ames, who had shrunk back to the corner.

"*He!*" at length uttered Thorne hoarsely,—almost in a whisper, "that purse-proud snob; *he,* of all men in the world—help *me!* I have been living in comfort, in luxury, through *him!* Why!" he shouted passionately, as if the truth had suddenly dawned upon him, "it was blood money!"

"Oh," said Tom horrified, "don't say that."

"It was blood money! A brother paid a price for his sister! May God take from me every particle of knowledge I have gained from his hands! May my brain be withered ——"

"Hush!" shouted Tom, his manner abruptly changing from complacent self-restraint to an intense earnestness that developed quickly into a passion as violent

as that of his accuser. "You don't know what you're saying! Stop!" he exclaimed as Thorne was about to speak again. "Not a word! Now, you listen to *me*,—all of you listen to me. I'm tired of being bullied. *I'm* going to speak now, and you've all got to believe what I say. You've all been sitting in judgment on me; you, all my best friends! You've doubted me, and I know it. You've been harping on that damned check until you've nearly driven me crazy. Now, I don't want to pass myself any bouquets, but I've never done a dishonorable act in my life; my record's clean. I've never done a low trick to any of you, nor to anybody else, and you've got to believe what I say, and you've got to stop questioning me, and you've got to leave me alone. You, Clax, who ought to know better, and you, Thorne, and all the rest of you, listen to me! I tell you once for all that I had nothing whatever to do with this thing of which I'm accused. You hear that?—absolutely nothing whatever. I'm as innocent as any man in this room.

I 'm not going to say another word on the subject; I 'm not going to explain anything, or account for anythng, or give any reasons to anybody, but every man in this room has got to believe me or, damnation and hell,"—and here Tom, in the fervor of his excitement tearing his coat off with a melodramatic flourish, cast it on the floor, and rolled up his sleeves—"I 'll fight the whole crowd of you!"

It was an involuntary resort to youthful, primeval methods, but Tom's speech was so obviously genuine, his manner so clearly that of one who felt bitterly and spoke the truth, that his little audience was visibly affected. The primitive emotions may be crude, but their very crudity lends them strength. This sudden, violent outburst of indignation, of resentment, of a righteous protest long repressed, was delivered with telling effect and swept all before it. Even Thorne, angry, grieved, frenzied though he was, could not fail to be strongly impressed. This "purse-proud snob," as he had fleeringly dubbed him, was in earnest,—he was telling the

truth,—he felt convinced that there could be no doubt of that.

For a few moments Thorne stood gazing at the impassioned, coatless Tom while the turmoil in his own soul gradually, almost reluctantly, subsided. And then, his innate manhood and sense of justice coming to the surface, he said, in his accustomed deep, solemn voice with something of a return to his old diffident manner:

"I—I do not know what to think. If I have accused you unfairly—you—you must forgive me. My sister denies it was you; it is only right for me to say that."

He stopped and sternly scrutinized the face of each man in the room, his gaze at last resting on Ames who still remained, crushed and motionless, in the corner. For a long time Thorne stood studying him in silence, and then he moved slowly over toward the door.

When he had reached the threshold he turned and once more faced the little knot gathered about Tom in the centre of the room.

"As to your helping me with money,

Brown," he said, " we shall settle that at another time. Cartright there will tell you that I did all in my power to learn who my benefactor was, without success. In regard to the other matter—I may have made an ass of myself, though God knows I had every reason to suspect you and to hate you. But," and here again his glance rested on the miserable, huddled form of Ames, " but—I will wait."

After he had gone there was a concerted sigh of relief from Tom's friends. Madden picked the coat up from the floor and held it out to his chum.

" Come, Kid," he said, " put this on—you 'll catch cold. And," he added seriously, " there 's no reason why you should lick us all in a bunch, old man. You 're wrong when you say we doubted you. We did n't doubt you, we merely wanted to know, that 's all. We believe every word you said, and as for the check, why, I say," and here he, in his turn, cast a furtive glance toward Ames, " we 'll let it drop. We 'll let it drop, fellows, won't we? "

" Sure thing! " was the hearty response.

"More than that," went on Madden earnestly, "I think I can promise on behalf of all of us, that not a word of this business will get beyond this room, at least as far as we are concerned."

There was murmur of hearty assent to this proposition, whereupon the tension of the situation was further relieved by Tubby, who exclaimed peevishly, forgetting the rather unfortunate part he had himself taken in the inquisition some time before:

"What I say is, if we 'd only cut out all this hot air and hysterics and gone down to Rammy's for some coffee and a big hot dog, we 'd all have felt better. Come on, fellows, let 's go now."

There was a general movement toward the door, the men passing out one by one in silence, including Madden and Cartright. As they filed out Ames rose from his seat and was about to follow them, but Tom quietly touched him on the arm and motioned him to stay.

CHAPTER XX

THE RECOVERY OF WILTON AMES

"WELL," muttered Ames sullenly, as he sank into a chair, while Tom closed the door on his departing guests, "what do you want? What are you going to do?"

Tom, making no immediate reply, walked over to the desk, picked up the check, and stood facing his companion with a look, half of pity, half of contempt. For a minute—a minute that seemed an age to the wretched Ames, the two regarded each other in silence.

For the first time in his life Tom felt himself called upon to act as censor, and the rôle was so strange, so unsuited to his boyish, unsuspecting nature that he found it extremely awkward to make a beginning. Moreover, the fact that this young

man was the brother of the girl whom he loved so fondly made the task infinitely more difficult. It seemed impossible that Evelyn could be the sister of this man—Evelyn so innocent, so girlish, so ingenuous, and Wilton so deceitful, so weak, so utterly without principle. And yet even Tom in his inexperience was aware that those apparent paradoxes were not at all uncommon; the same stem may bear two flowers,—one sweet and perfect and pure; the other mean and shrunken and unbeautiful. So much may be due to the withering blight of circumstances and environment.

"Wilton," he said presently, summoning up his resolution and speaking in a tone that was ominously solemn, "I hardly know what to say to you, for I don't believe we understand the same language. Don't mistake me in this matter. I am not angry with you. I 'm not going to scold you. I 'm sorry for you—for I believe you have been duped and at the mercy of that snake Colton. But I 'm more sorry for your mother, and for your

sister, and—I 'm destroying this bit of paper, not only for your sake, but especially for theirs."

He picked up the check and held it over the chimney of the still lighted lamp. In a moment, with a tiny explosion, it sprang into a blaze, and he turned it one way and the other so that it might burn the more freely, while it writhed and crackled and rustled, little black flakes fluttering off from time to time and dropping noiselessly down upon the desk.

"There," he said, when the check had been entirely consumed, "that is wiped out. No one will have a chance to study the—my signature again. I don't ask why you did it, Wilton; I don't care. That is all past and gone now. But there is one thing that I do ask, and insist upon knowing, and that is, *what are you going to do about the girl?*"

"Tom," replied Ames, resorting to his characteristic whine, "I—I know it was a low-down thing about that check. I—I was hard pressed, and, well, Colton—he made me ——"

"Never mind about the check, or about Colton," returned Tom brusquely, "the thing is—what are you going to do about the girl—Miss Thorne?"

"Oh, Kid," pleaded Ames, "you must n't be too hard on me about the girl. I—I love her, of course—I do indeed," he said, with a faint spark of earnestness in his voice, though he at once returned to his old cringing manner, "but, you know, Kid, I am dreadfully poor—I—I" and here he halted miserably.

"That 's all very well, Wilton," persisted Tom, "but what I want to know is —what are you going to do about her? In plain words, are you going to turn her down or not? You have got her to believe in you—she was willing and ready to go away for your sake. Now, I repeat, are you going to act like a gentleman or a scoundrel?"

"Oh, Kid," replied Ames pleadingly, "I don't see why you have to be so fierce about it. You know I 'm deucedly poor. Other fellows would do just as I have done ——"

"Other fellows!" broke in Tom, now fairly stirred to a passion of indignation. "What sort of fellows are you talking about, anyway? Why, let me tell you, Ames, I 'm no preacher, but if a girl, a young, sweet, confiding girl, such as Miss Thorne is, should think enough of me to put her love for me above all things in the world, banking on me alone for happiness, I 'd stick to that girl through everything, for I 'd know that she loved me—*me,* do you understand, and not anything she might gain by belonging to me, and we can't always be sure of that much even in the carefully proper women we marry! You 're ashamed about that check, because the rotten standards of society have made it a worse thing for a so-called gentleman to steal money than to trifle with a sweet, pure girl's affections. Why, Wilton, I don't care a continental about that check,—but, confound it all, man, I *do* care about that girl. I 've seen her, I know what she is. I know of her devotion to you, of her whole-hearted, unselfish affection, and I tell you, that girl with

her love, her tenderness, her sympathy, is a queen! She 's too good to be thrown down, especially by such a two-spot as you!"

"Oh, come, Kid," said Ames weakly, "you 're rubbing it in rather strong. Hang it all,—Marian—Miss Thorne, is everything to me—but, Tom, I must have time, I must have ——"

Ames stopped short on hearing a sharp knocking at the door. Before Tom, who was in no mood for an interruption, could collect himself sufficiently to utter the conventional "Come in," the door opened, and Mrs. Ames entered, evidently in a state of extreme agitation. On seeing her son she stopped in surprise.

"Why, Wilton," she exclaimed, "I did n't expect to find you here. Tom—I presume Wilton has come to you on the same errand which brings me here. You must excuse me, Tom, for intruding on your privacy, but I felt that our relations were such that I must come and have a talk with you."

"Come in, Mrs. Ames, you are always

welcome, of course," replied Tom with a somewhat forced attempt at hospitality, and at the same time with a very much puzzled countenance.

"Oh, Tom," cried Mrs. Ames, as she sank into the chair he offered her, "I could n't sleep last night for thinking of that poor girl. I went to her in her room after the race."

The men started and gazed at each other in astonishment.

"What," exclaimed Tom in dismay, "you went to her rooms,—to Miss Thorne's rooms?"

"Yes, I did. I simply could n't do otherwise under the circumstances. I could n't bear to think of her alone, with no woman to sympathize with her—with no companion except that brutal, tyrannical brother. And since I 've seen what sort of a girl she is, I 've come to you to ask that you keep your promise with her and be the man—the honorable, upright man that I 've always thought you to be."

"Keep my promise to her!" repeated Tom blankly.

"Oh, Tom," continued Mrs. Ames in a voice full of bitter reproach, "how could you act like this—so treacherously—so unworthily of yourself, when you knew we all loved you and believed in you! How could you have broken our hearts! To think that you could have trifled so with poor Evelyn, that you could have utterly destroyed all her girlish ideals! It is so cruel, so base—I can hardly believe it. But it was even worse in you to treat Miss Thorne as you did;—to send her money privately, and arrange to have her leave with you; to raise her hopes, and win her affection and her trust, and then at last, to desert her. Oh, Tom, Tom, it was n't worthy of you—it was n't worthy of you."

During Mrs. Ames's castigation Tom had stood, dumb with a conflict of emotions. He knew not what to say, what to think,—he did not even know what to feel.

But with the last accusing words that were spoken, Wilton, with a cry of agonized protest, suddenly dropped on his knees at his mother's side and buried his

face in her lap, sobbing passionately. The tide had turned at last. His better self, so long repressed, so long submerged by circumstance, by Fate, by his own weakness, now finally asserted itself in a complete, an overwhelming torrent of confession.

"Oh, mother," he cried convulsively, "stop—you must not say another word against Tom. He has been noble and kind and generous, and everybody has blamed him. It was *not* Tom, mother! It was not Tom who sent the check—it was I. Oh, mother dear, can you ever forgive me? I have been all that you have said of Tom,—base, and mean, and low, and wicked—but,—but it was not Tom; it was all my fault, I am the only one to blame!"

And while the son laid bare the wounds and scars of his soul; while the mother bore these cruel cuts and lashings to her mother's heart as only a mother can, Tom, with a hot stinging in his eyes that he endeavored vainly to wink away, stepped softly from the room and, closing the door

tenderly, almost reverently behind him, walked quietly—more quietly than he had ever done before—down the staircase, and into the free, glad, wholesome, sinless air of out-of-doors.

CHAPTER XXI

WHY TUBBY WAS LONESOME

FOR some strange reason Class Day afternoon was a dreary occasion for Tubby Anderson. His usually reliable good spirits had deserted him, and he wandered about aimlessly from place to place, endeavoring vainly to seek solace in the various kinds of entertainment provided by the committees of the graduating class. One cause for his loneliness was that a number of his most intimate friends had gone down to Red Top with the crew and substitutes weeks before in preparation for the Yale race. Madden and Tom, it is true, were not included in this fortunate category, Madden having been detained for certain reasons connected with the science of astronomy, which an unreasonable faculty had deemed of

greater importance than rowing on a possibly victorious crew in the great aquatic event of the year. Tom had likewise been persuaded to remain in order to make up certain deficiencies concerned with the elevating, engrossing pursuit of cryptogamic botany. But, though Tubby spent the greater part of the afternoon searching for these two devoted chums, his quest was singularly unfruitful. In some unaccountable way they had apparently disappeared from the face of the earth.

His miserable cap and gown—somehow he felt like a rank hypocrite in that cap and gown—enveloped his person and topped his cranium all the day, imparting about as much energy and enthusiasm as the hot room of a Turkish bath. He had missed his customary satisfying slumber the night before, on account of the much prolonged senior spread in the Delta. He had had absolutely no dinner that evening—why, nobody could have explained, except that he had simply been one of the unfortunates who never find time or place to dine (even provided they

have the appetite or inclination), on that strenuous occasion.

At night the Yard, from Johnston Gate to President Eliot's house, from the Appleton Chapel to Gore Hall, was cast into a thousand fantastic, convenient shadows, by chain after chain of many-colored Japanese lanterns strung from elm to elm, with the accompanying illusion of miles upon miles of these Oriental festoons. The brilliant glare in front of University Hall threw the great body of the old quadrangle into a soft, palpable, soothing shadow. In front of this old seat of administration, lighting up the beautiful, classic white façade of the building, flared seven bronze torches of heroic size—spouts of brilliant gas flame, flickering uncertainly in the gentle breezes of the June night. Above them, against the white stone of the Hall in tiny jets of light, were outlined the numerals of the year of Grace in which Tubby was graduating.

Turning dejectedly away he meandered over toward the granite buttresses of Gore Hall, and as he approached the building

his manner underwent a sudden change and the gloom of his chubby countenance was replaced by a cheerful glow. For, in the shadows of the protecting wing of the building, he caught sight of what seemed to be the familiar figure of the long sought for Jean, seated on a camp-chair. Yes, sure enough, it was his strangely missing friend, but, as he drew still nearer, he observed, somewhat to his confusion, that the sweet singer was not alone. Despite the shadows that lurked in the angle of the building, it was now easy to detect that there was a vision in white by his friend's side—very, very much by his side.

Tubby hesitated. Under no circumstance was he ever very "keen" for women's society, and to-night he felt especially averse to it. But his very natural masculine curiosity, added to his longing for some kind of company, even though it did involve a member of the fair sex, impelled him onward, and he approached for a nearer inspection. Much to his surprise, he observed that Jean's companion

was none other than the pretty sister of his friend's "grind,"—looking even prettier, more bewitching than ever in her frock of white, her large, graceful hat,—her figure set in delicate, soft relief by the shadowy nimbus that hovered in the secluded angle of the library.

"Oh—beg pardon," announced Tubby, with cheerful embarrassment, as he removed his cap,—"Miss—Miss Skimpy—that is, Miss—Miss ——"

But here he was forced to haul up short, for he could n't to save his life remember the young woman's last name. It was she who came generously to the rescue.

"'MacLea,'" she said, smiling sweetly. "How do you do, Mr. Anderson?"

"Oh, first rate—fine!" replied Tubby, not looking the part by any means. "Er—er—by the way, Jean, are n't you going to sing with the Glee Club, old man?"

Jean looked around upon his friend suspiciously. He had no particular fear of Tubby, but a Senior is very apt to cling strongly to his prerogative on Class Day

night, especially when that prerogative constitutes the maiden of his dreams.

"No, I 'm not going to sing," he replied shortly. "Let the Juniors have their innings—they can take care of it."

There was a moment of awkward silence, during which Tubby fumbled his cap in the futile search for an inspiration. In the end he had to give it up, however, and as Jean cruelly turned his back on him, he withdrew with a mumbled apology, narrowly escaping an upset over an unsuspected camp-chair in his rear.

Once well out of ear-shot, he murmured in a tone calculated to soothe his injured pride:

"Fussing! Always fussing! The whole business is one big fussing match. Oh, gee, if I could only get some of the fellows and go over to Rammy's for a hot dog!"

He wandered past Gore Hall, once more entering the soft, varicolored gleam of Japanese lanterns, and, being caught up in the current, was swept along in the maze of those surging toward the Union

and Beck Hall spreads, across Quincy Street.

Entering Beck Hall, he passed out through the door at the back and found himself in a large court-yard in which another section of the Class Day throng were seated at tables. At one end of the enclosure was a temporary dance pavilion, while a tent, open on all sides, had been erected over in the corner along Harvard Street.

Threading his way among the tables and standing groups Tubby proceeded to a certain space on the left, where a number of old grads and a few under classmen were devoting themselves to a bowl of punch.

It was good punch, very good punch, and Tubby addressed himself temporarily to the submersion of his sorrows. Then brushing through a grove of potted palms and stumbling ungracefully over another upset camp-chair, he landed on the dancing pavilion and for a few moments miserably attached himself to the fringe of stag onlookers that stood

aimlessly on the outskirts. In vain did he scan the happy, laughing crowd of dancers for a glimpse of his friends. Jean had already been accounted for. But—where were the rest? Where, especially, were Tom and Madden?

As he slowly revolved these matters in his mind he made his way, without purpose, to a far corner of the enclosure, and there, as if in answer to his troubled question, in eager converse, he beheld Madden and Edith seated at a table, bending toward each other in true Class Day absorption, oblivious, regardless of the outside world, knowing only one world—that world peopled, and very plentifully peopled, by themselves.

Instantly Tubby felt a return of his wonted spirits. There was the usual, significant vacant chair at Madden's table, indicating that the chaperon had providentially vanished as is the habit of the best regulated chaperons. He would join them, occupy the chair, and make up for some of the doleful hours he had spent that wretched night. Stepping forward

gleefully, he gave Madden a resounding thump on the back.

"Hello, Clax, old man! Hello, Edith! I've been looking for you everywhere. What the deuce has become of everybody? Where have you been all the time?"

But woe for Tubby! If he had but known it, he had rudely interrupted Madden in one of the most eloquent, most critical appeals of his life.

The latter wheeled around upon his fat friend with an expression of ineffable disgust.

"What the devil! Where did you butt in from? Can't you see that I'm—er—er—engaged?"

A delicious blush overspread Edith's face.

"Engaged!" repeated Tubby aghast, for he was of a sadly literal turn of mind, "no—honest—is that so? Gee—I—I beg pardon. I did n't know what was doing, that is—er—er—excuse me!"

Whereupon he retreated again in a tumult of confusion. When he had got well out of hearing he halted once more

and proceeded to soliloquize as he had done previously—like to one who laments the fallen fortunes of his friends.

"Fussing again! Nothing but fussing. Everybody's fussing. Gee whiz! Madden's engaged! Well, if that is n't the limit! What the deuce has got into the bunch, anyway? Oh, for one crack at Rammy's!"

The merry whirl of dancers in the pavilion was a mockery—he did not dance. The joyous, chattering, giggling couples at the tables were a taunt—he did not "fuss." Once again he scrutinized them closely in the forlorn hope that he might meet with some familiar face—some friendly gesture that would make him a part and parcel of them. But he might as well have been cast away on a desert island. He was "remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow."

With a sigh of genuine grief he turned his back upon the brilliantly illuminated Yard and sauntered slowly over toward the long tent where waiters were serving at somewhat more secluded tables. His

appetite, ever of a practicable character, had been whetted by the punch, and as a last desperate resort he had determined to extract some slight solace from the all-dessert repast that constituted the "spread."

As he stood looking about for a convenient table he became aware of a voice engaged in a low, earnest whisper, apparently just at his side. The voice sounded familiar, though the owner thereof was effectually concealed by a dense screen of potted palms. Tubby stepped to the edge of the bower, and poking his head around beyond the protecting fronds, started in surprise, and then proceeded to stare in absorbed, open-eyed, full-blown curiosity.

And well he might have stared. For there sat Tom—his own beloved Tom Brown; and opposite him, but *very* near him, sat Evelyn—the Evelyn who, Tubby had thought, was no longer even on speaking terms with her former sweetheart!

Tom was speaking earnestly, very earnestly, his head bent over toward his com-

panion, almost under the protective brim of the immense picture hat that she wore; his words came in whispers—eager, intense, voluble; and what he said appeared—from where Tubby peeked—to be of a pleading, persuading, appealing character. And then—Tubby could scarce believe his eyes—Tom gently seized Evelyn's unresisting hand—it was the *left* hand, even Tubby noticed that—and held it long and lovingly, palpably squeezing it from time to time while he continued his subdued, passionate, and no doubt eloquent appeal. Next—horror upon horrors—he took something from his waistcoat pocket—Tubby could see it sparkling gorgeously in the gleam of the electric lights.

It was too much for Tubby. The thing was beyond his comprehension. Tom—who by all rules of ethics should have been cast into utter darkness and disdained by this girl whom he had apparently so grievously wronged, was actually —visibly— He simply had to speak. The words welled to his lips involuntarily, al-

most unconsciously, as if impelled by an irresistible force from within:

"*Gee,* you 've got a nerve!"

Evelyn snatched her hand away in confusion, while Tom turned about abruptly upon the intruder. Catching sight of the round, saucer-eyed face of his chunky friend, his wrath exploded, and he burst into words of indignant, exasperated protest—words which, most miraculous to record, were almost precisely the same as those recently employed by his chum Madden.

"A nerve? Confound it—*you 've* got a nerve! What are you everlastingly butting in for? Can't you see that I 'm —er—er—engaged?"

But Tubby waited to hear no more. He was dumbfounded—overwhelmed. Engaged! The thing was becoming epidemic. In a daze he stumbled his way back to the punch table, threading his path once more between the tables and their chattering couples, past the groups of old grads who stood here and there surveying the animated scene with reminiscent,

and sometimes with strangely moist eyes; past the Right Reverend the Bishop of Massachusetts who, wearing a most unecclesiastical Panama hat, was conversing with a group of chaperons.

He seized the glass of punch that was handed to him, and was about to gulp it down in one final effort to drown his rapidly accumulating woe, when suddenly he paused, with the glass poised in mid air, as an awful, a paralyzing, a hitherto undreamt-of thought struck him. For, whereas he had never been a "fusser" himself, regarding girls as a more or less ornamental adjunct to the serious concerns of life, yet when he saw, as he had just seen, his dearest friends rapidly fading away under the subtle influence of feminine charm, when he observed that fussing may and does develop into concrete actualities, the dread conviction fell upon him with all the force of a deadly blow, that somehow, and some day, this same marvellous thing might happen to him—that there might be a girl somewhere, even now existing in the wide

world, upon whose finger *he* might eventually, and with eager, earnest, whispered words, slip a ——

The thing was too awful to contemplate. With a sickening shudder he gulped down his glass of punch.

THE END.

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